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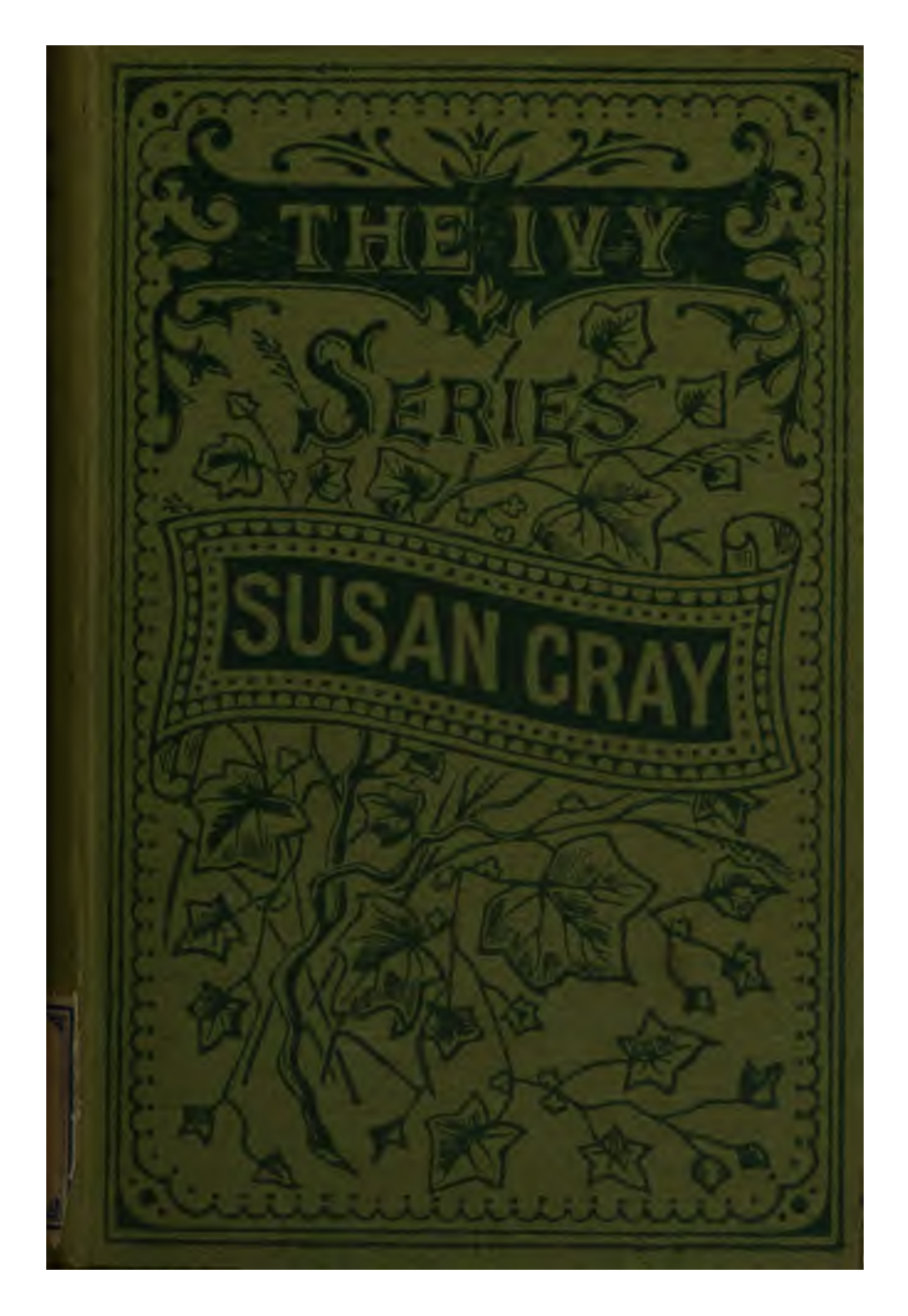
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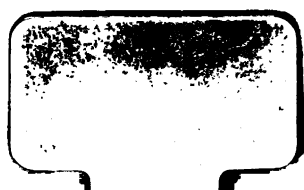
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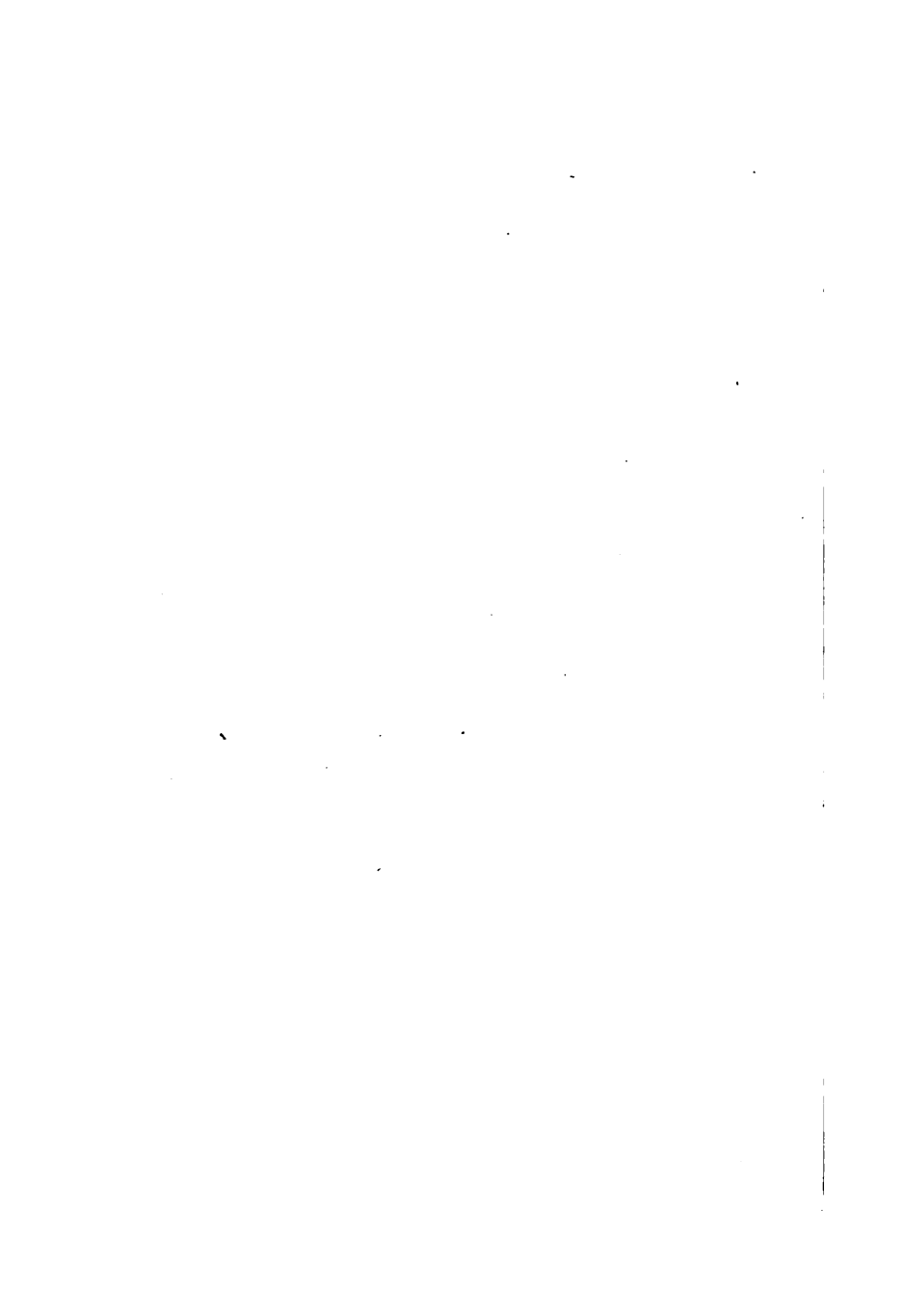
THE IVY

SERIES

SUSAN GRAY







THE  
HISTORY OF SUSAN GRAY.

AS RELATED BY A CLERGYMAN.

INTENDED FOR THE BENEFIT OF YOUNG WOMEN  
WHEN GOING INTO SERVICE, ETC.

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER," ETC.

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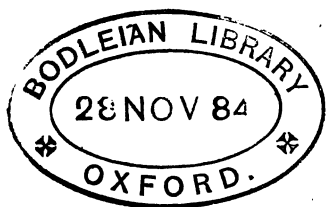
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*It is proper to advertise the Reader that the present Edition of SUSAN GRAY has been revised, corrected, and, it is hoped, in some parts essentially improved by the Author*





## THE HISTORY OF SUSAN GRAY.

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**I**N the parish over which it has pleased God to appoint me pastor, not far from the fair town of Ludlow, on the banks of the beautiful river Teme, are the garden, the little orchard, and the ruins of the cottage, which, many years ago, were rented by James Gray.

A little coppice on the hill-side shelters this pleasant spot from the north wind, and a row of large willows grows at the foot of the garden by the river-side. I became acquainted with James Gray when I first came to my living. He was a pious young man, and was so happy as to have a wife who feared God; the character still given in this country by those who remember Mary Gray is, that she was a pious, sober-minded young woman—a keeper at home (Titus ii. 5), as the apostle exhorts women to be, and a most kind and dutiful wife.

James gained a comfortable livelihood by working in his garden. He cultivated his land with so much care, that he had the earliest and best peas and beans, gooseberries and currants, salads and greens, in the country : these he always sold at a moderate price, never attempting to deceive or cheat the purchaser ; for it was one of his most favourite sayings that "honesty is the glory of a poor man."

For some years these worthy young people lived happily in their cottage. It is true that they were obliged to work very hard, and, now and then, in a severe winter, to live rather hardly also ; but they loved each other, and, next to serving their God, they thought it their duty to please each other ; and, as the holy Scripture says, "a dinner of herbs, where love is, is better than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith." Prov. xv. 17.

After his daily work, James never omitted reading a chapter in the Bible, and praying with his wife before they went to bed. "For," as he often used to say, "when we lay ourselves down in our beds, we know not whether we shall be ever suffered to rise from them again ; many have died in their sleep : every night, there-

fore, we ought to renew our covenant with our Saviour, confessing to God the evil we have committed during the past day, and seeking anew to be made partakers of the benefits of the death of Christ; so, should death visit us in the hour of night, we shall not go into another world unprepared."

These excellent, though humble, persons had one little girl, to whom they gave the name of Susan; a child so exceedingly lovely in outward appearance, that strangers passing by would stop to admire her as she stood at the cottage-door, and the more so as, by the blessing of God on the instructions of her Christian parents, she was remarkably modest and courteous in her deportment. Moreover, the very great plainness and neatness of her rustic dress was much to be commended, and proved that her mother was one of those women who are observant of these words of the apostle: "I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

I often went to visit these pious persons, and

was greatly delighted with their holy discourse ; for a foolish or profligate word never proceeded from their lips, and their child was so clean, so well ordered, so dutiful, and so gentle, that, young as she was, I formed the greatest hopes of her, and believed she would become a good Christian.

It pleased Heaven, however, to deprive this poor child of her good parents. She was just turned six years of age, when a fever, which raged in this neighbourhood at that time, seized first upon Mary Gray, and then upon her husband ; and, notwithstanding all the care that could be taken, they both died. But death to them was no evil, for they had always trusted in their Saviour, and endeavoured to fulfil His will ; and it pleased Him to take them from this world of sin and labour, to that happy place where men are made "equal unto the angels, and are the children of God." Luke xx. 36.

But their death seemed to be a sad evil to their little girl ; for whom I and my wife felt so much sorrow, that had we not had many young children of our own, we would have taken her into our own family. As soon as her dear father and mother were dead, she was carried to the

parish poorhouse ; after she had remained there about two months, an old woman, her father's aunt, who lived in Ludlow, undertook to maintain her till she should be twelve years of age, if the parish would allow her twelvepence a-week.

The parish having given their consent to this plan, the child was carried to the town by the old woman, and for many years I saw no more of her ; for about that time it pleased God to afflict me with a disorder, which for some time prevented me from attending to my parish, or taking heed unto the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made me an overseer.

When, at the end of twelve years, by the favour of Heaven, I was restored to health, and could ride about the country and visit my children (for so I call my parishioners), I went several times to Ludlow to inquire after Susan Gray, but could hear nothing of her ; her old aunt was dead, and her house was shut up.

Thus it was out of my power to serve the daughter of the worthy James and Mary Gray ; but I trusted that Heaven, who "visits the sins of the parents upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation," would not fail to bless the child of these excellent people : and so, as I

hoped, it proved to be. God did bless Susan Gray : for a time indeed He did try her ; but at length He made her who had sown in tears reap in joy, and rewarded her with an exceeding great reward.

James and Mary Gray had been dead about thirteen years, when one evening, as I was sitting by my fire with my wife and family, I was called out to a poor woman who kept a very homely but reputable lodging-house in the village. "I made bold to come, Sir," said she, "to ask you to read prayers this evening to a poor young woman, who is, I fear, at the point of death."

"And who," said I, "is this young woman?"

"I know but little of her," answered she : "she came to my house fourteen days ago ; soon after that great storm of thunder and lightning which struck the church steeple, and blasted your great pear-tree, Sir. It was after twelve o'clock in the night when she knocked at the door. I happened to be up, finishing some work, or I could not have let her in."

"And pray," asked my wife, who had stepped out into the kitchen after me, "from whence do you suppose she comes?"

"Indeed," replied the woman, "I should think

from no great distance ; for, although she had a small bundle of linen in her hand, she had neither hat nor cloak on."

"I fear," said my wife, looking at me and shaking her head, "that this is some unfortunate young creature, who knows not the fear of God."

"Truly, Madam," said the woman, "I would not wish to harbour any bad person in my house ; but I really think that this poor friendless girl is one whom no one can say anything ill against. She is extremely neat and plain in her dress, and most civil and obliging in her carriage ; while she was tolerably well, which she was during the first week of her being with me, she did some little work for Farmer Flemming, who, as she told me, knew her father and mother ; and then she paid me every night her twopence for her lodging. But since she has been ill, she has scarcely been able to raise enough to keep her from starving, by selling, one by one, the few clothes which she brought with her. She has a handsome Bible and Prayer-Book, which are constantly in her hands. These, she says, she would not sell, if she could possibly help it, for she calls them her only comforters."

"Did you not say," asked my wife, "that



Farmer Flemming knew this poor girl's father and mother ? ”

“ Yes, Madam,” replied the woman ; “ they lived many years ago in this parish ; their names were Gray.”

“ Gray ! ” exclaimed my wife ; is it possible ? ” And she looked at me.

I immediately put on my hat, and, following the woman, hastened down into the village, thinking, as I walked along, of the wonderful ways of God : how sometimes for a season the good seem to be chastened and the wicked to flourish. But “ we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” Rom. viii. 28.

When I arrived at the lodging-house, I was conducted into a small room ; where, on a little bed, and covered only with a thin blanket, lay a young woman, apparently in a kind of doze. She was very pale, and appeared to be in the last stage of a decline ; notwithstanding which, there was such an expression of peace spread over her languid countenance as I never before saw equalled.

While I stood looking upon her, for I would not suffer the woman of the house to awaken her, I could not help thinking of James and

Mary Gray, and I said to myself, "Is this the same fair Susan Gray, who, not many years ago was blessed with a kind father and mother to take care of her, and to watch over her ! and is she now without a friend, without a home ? Is sickness so soon come upon her, and must she die, while yet in the flower and prime of life ? But the days of man are ' as grass : as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone.' " Ps. ciii. 15, 16. So saith the royal David.

While these thoughts passed in my mind, she opened her eyes, and tried to raise herself in her bed ; and, smiling, said in a faint voice, " I most humbly thank you, Sir, for visiting a poor orphan ; although I was quite an infant when I lost my father and mother, yet I remember how often you visited their humble cottage, and how often you kindly noticed their little child."

I turned away to hide the tears which came into my eyes ; and she, not understanding wherefore I turned from her, and why I did not answer, said, " Sir, I fear by the freedom of my speech, I have offended you. You, perhaps, do not remember Susan Gray. My father and

mother lived many years ago in the little cottage on the river-side, just below the church."

By this time, I had recovered myself, and turning to her I took her hand, and said, "Poor young creature, do you think it possible that I should be offended at your innocent joy on seeing me? No, my daughter, I have not forgotten you; I have not ceased to remember with affection your worthy parents. But where have you lived since the death of your aunt? what has reduced you to this state? have you not met with any friends in this world to protect you, and to supply to you the place of your lost parents?"

She replied, with a degree of piety which caused my eyes to fill with tears of joy, "I have not indeed, Sir, met with many friends; but that God who is the father of the fatherless has not forsaken me. I have had many trials and temptations," she added, "and those who ought to have been my protectors laid snares for me. But I trusted that 'Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, would deliver me from this present evil world; according to the will of God and our Father.'" Gal. i. 3, 4. "And praised be God," said she, clasping her hands together, "He has delivered me; I am now above the

power of wicked pleasures. Although I am poor, Sir," continued she, "and soon must die, yet I am not unhappy; and now I am so far on my journey, I would not, were it in my power, be restored to health, and return again into the busy and wicked world."

While she was speaking, she grew very faint: so for the present I besought her to speak no more of the things that were past, telling her that I hoped, should she get better, to hear all her history. Then, taking up a Prayer-Book which lay by her side, I read a few prayers to her; for I saw she was not able to go through the whole of the service for the sick with me; and then having wished her a good night, and promised that I would visit her again next day, I hastened home.

When my wife heard my account of Susan, late as it was, she put on her hat and cloak, and, having made a little gruel, and warmed it with a glass of our best made wine and some spice, she herself went down into the village to see the poor girl. As she passed by, she called upon Nurse Browne, a good old woman, whose cottage is close by my garden-gate, and engaged her to attend and wait upon the poor sick girl till her

disorder had taken some turn either for the better or the worse ; if death to so good a girl, as Susan proved to be, can be said to be worse than a restoration to health.

But methinks I run rather too much into length in my story ; suffice it to say, that for about ten days my wife and I continued to visit Susan in the poor lodging-house, at the end of which time she was so much better, that we removed her from thence to Nurse Browne's cottage, which, being higher up the hill, and situated on the same sunny bank with my house, we thought would be more cheerful and airy for the poor girl.

Nourishing food and good nursing had done much for her ; but still the doctor, who sometimes visited us from Ludlow, declared she could not live. She had caught a cold, which had fallen upon her lungs, and was in a deep decline, which we believed would probably end in her death before winter. But although she as well as those about her knew that she was in a dying state, yet never did I see a more cheerful or happy creature than she was when we brought her to the nurse's cottage.

Thank God, she was not in much pain, and

she had made her peace with him; her lamp was trimmed—she was prepared for the long journey which she was soon to take. She spent many hours of the day in reading and prayer, and sometimes at noon, when the sun was high in the heavens, and the air was warm, she would sit at the door of the house, looking around her upon the green woods, the river rolling through the meadows, and the church upon the hill, where she hoped her body would be laid beside those of her dear parents, while her soul was mounting, far above the clouds, to that happy place, where those who have endured temptation “shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.” Jas. i. 12.

While she was at this cottage, she, by little and little, when she found herself able, told us her story, which, much as we loved and admired her before, rendered her still more and more dear to us.

But before I relate it, as I intend to do to the best of my power in her own language, I must address a few words of my own to those young women who shall hereafter read the history of Susan Gray.

I am an old man, being seventy-four last Old Christmas-day: I have been Rector of this

parish forty years; and during that time I can say, with King David, "I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." Ps. xxxvii. 25. I will not say that misfortunes do not sometimes come upon very good people; but God is "a strength to the poor man who fears Him, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat." Isa. xxv. 4.

Yet, while I affirm this for the encouragement of those who try to serve their God to the best of their power, I must not hide from you who shall read this, what has been the end of all the bad people whom I have been so unfortunate as to know since I lived in this village. I will speak particularly of bad women. I never knew a vain, a light, or bold girl, whose end in this world was not shame, poverty, or disease. For a time a bad young woman may seem to prosper; she may deck herself in silver and gold, she may paint her face and tire her head like the wicked queen Jezebel. But these are the words of God, "Hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; evil shall come upon thee: thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee: thou

shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know." Isa. xlvii. 8-11.

And I pray you, my daughters, do not deceive yourselves, nor suppose, because you see many bad women around you, that God will spare them for their numbers: the city of Sodom, in which there were not ten good men, was burnt with fire from heaven; so, were there not ten good girls in the town or village in which you live, the multitude of the sinners would not save them. All bad people will have their portion in the lake which burns with brimstone and fire.

Nor must you hope that you will be saved by being secret in your crimes, for night is not dark with God. He knows even all your thoughts; and if we suffer our minds to be filled with evil thoughts; He will not receive us into heaven when we die.

Attend, therefore, my daughters, to what an old man says, who has studied God's book from his cradle to his old age; and all of you try to equal Susan Gray, that you may with her enter into the joy of your Lord.

But now let me proceed to tell you her story, as I heard it from herself.



## SUSAN GRAY'S ACCOUNT OF HERSELF.

WHEN I consider the early part of my life, and the pious instructions which I received from my beloved parents, (said Susan Gray), my mind is filled with shame and sorrow, to think how little I profited by them, and how, for a time, I entirely forgot all that had been taught me, and yielded to every temptation which fell in my way. Thus I became, early in life, convinced, by sad experience, of the utter depravity of my own heart, and of my total incapacity of turning to good without divine assistance.

Many particulars concerning my childhood you are well acquainted with, my dear Sir ; but, much as you respected my parents, and often as you visited them, you can form little idea of their anxiety to give me a right apprehension of the religion of Christ. So great were the pains they took, that they made me acquainted, before they were called hence, with most of the leading doctrines of Christianity ; such as the fall of man—

the evil of the human heart—the need of a Saviour—the nature of God—and the wonderful plan formed by divine wisdom for man's salvation. And O ! what endearing ways were used by these loved parents to win my infant heart to God ! How often did my gentle mother mingle her tears with prayers for my eternal welfare ! How sweet is the recollection of pious parents ! "The memory of the just is blessed." Prov. x. 7.

But I will leave this part of my story, and go on to that time when I was taken by my aunt to her house, in a little narrow street in the town of Ludlow. I was too young to feel very much the sad change : a sad one indeed it was, for even in the poorhouse I had lived in cleanliness, and had been encouraged to behave well ; but with my poor aunt I lived in dirt and wretchedness, I was suffered to keep company with bad children, to tell lies, to take God's name in vain, and even to steal. My aunt was old, and made herself very sickly by having been in the constant habit, from her youth up, of drinking strong liquor. She had never been an industrious, cleanly woman ; and now that she was advanced in years, she became so dirty and disagreeable, that no decent person cared to enter her house.

She had, since the death of her husband, sold, by little and little, all her furniture, till there was scarcely anything left in her house. The floor of the house was covered with litter and dirt, the broken windows were filled up with paper and rags, and we had no other than straw beds to sleep upon.

But what was worse than all this, was the wickedness which went on in this house. My aunt not only herself took God's name in vain, and entirely neglected all religious duties, but she encouraged all sorts of bad people to come about her. I never loved my aunt ; for although she often indulged me to an extreme, giving me of the best she had to eat and drink, and suffering me to go unpunished for many grievous faults, yet she sometimes fell into the most violent passions with me upon the most trifling occasion. She would sometimes beat me severely for throwing down her tobacco-pipe or snuff-box ; and would, at the same time, allow me to swear and tell lies, without correcting me in the least.

In this manner I lived till I was about ten years of age, and seemed entirely to have forgotten every lesson I had ever received from my parents ; but although God was absent from my

thoughts, yet was I remembered by Him, and in due time He returned and took pity upon me.

Where was I different from my young companions? Where was I better than these, that the Lord should save me as a brand plucked out of the fire, while these were left to perish? O God! how can I praise Thee sufficiently for that Thou hast preserved me from the ways that lead to destruction?

When I was about the age of ten years, my aunt sent me to gather sticks in the fields, and I took with me, as a companion, a little girl of my own age, the daughter of a widow, who kept an huckster's shop near my aunt's house. This little girl, whose name was Charlotte Owen, was no better taught than myself, though she was indulged in being dressed in as costly a manner as her mother could afford; and the gay apparel of this little girl often used to excite in my young mind the most envious and malicious feelings.

Charlotte used to take a delight in ridiculing my ragged and dirty appearance; and I, on the other hand, found a thousand little ways of venting my spite at her. Thus, even in those early days, a spirit of hatred and rivalry began between us, which, on my part, I have only been able to

subdue by the assistance of my Saviour; for though weak in myself, in Him I found strength. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

When Charlotte and I had gotten into the fields opposite to the castle, instead of looking for sticks, she began to taunt and reproach me with my ragged dress, and I failed not to say everything to her which I thought would vex her. Our contention at last ran so high, that we parted—she running home to her mother, and I going further out in quest of sticks.

As I was sauntering down a narrow lane at the back of the town, I saw, in the hedge, one of the prettiest little birds I had ever beheld. It was not much larger than a robin, and had a hooked bill like a hawk, but his feathers were of the brightest red, blue, and purple. I immediately laid down my sticks, and walked softly up to the bush in which the bird sat; but no sooner had I put out my hand to take hold of him, than he hopped through the hedge into the next field; I followed it there, and thought I was sure of it, when again it made its escape into the lane.

At length, with much trouble, I caught the pretty little creature, and was surprised to find

that it was so tame as to sit upon my finger, as aunt's magpie used to do.

I was so delighted with my prize, that, forgetting my sticks, I hastened into the town, proudly holding up the bird, who perched quietly upon my hand.

Just as I was got into one of the largest streets, I heard somebody cry out, "Ah! there is my mistress's paroquet;" and immediately a very decent elderly woman came up to me, and said, with an air of much joy, "My good little girl, where did you find my mistress's bird?"

"Your mistress's bird, indeed!" said I; "it is my bird."

"No," replied the woman, "that cannot be; it flew out of my mistress's window this morning, and over the garden-wall into the fields."

"For all that, he is not your bird," I answered; "he is mine:" and I was going to run off with him, when she caught hold of my gown, and said, "My mistress will give you half-a-crown for it."

"No, no, no," I cried, "I will have it."

At that moment, my aunt coming out of a shop hard by, and seeing me struggle with the servant, called out, "Hey-day, what is the matter? what are you doing to the child?"

"Come, aunt, come!" I exclaimed; "come and take my part: I won't part with the bird."

My aunt was at first very angry with the servant; but when she heard that I was to have half-a-crown, if I would consent to part with the bird, she turned all her anger upon me, and bade me give it to the servant, and follow her to her mistress's house to receive the money.

I obeyed; but I was sadly vexed, and went muttering the whole way to the lady's house.

We passed through several streets, till at length we came to one which leads up to the castle. The servant stopped before an old house close by the gates of the castle-walk; she opened the door, and bade me wait in the hall.

While I stood there I stared around me with wonder, for I had never before been in a house belonging to gentlefolks. The hall was a large room, hung round with pictures, which I afterwards learned were taken from the history of the Bible. At the further end was a window, partly filled with coloured glass, which looked into a garden full of tall trees; beside the window was a clock made of very shining black wood, ornamented with golden flowers. On one side of the hall was a door which opened into a kitchen,

and on the other was one which led into the parlour.

When the servant had brought me into the house, she went immediately towards the parlour, and left the door open so wide that I could see all within. The parlour was hung with paper of a dark colour ; and in one corner there was a cupboard filled with very fine china.

Over the fire-place was a coloured picture of three very pretty little girls ; one of them held an orange in her hand, and one had a bird upon her finger, and the least held a rose.

By the fireside sat an old lady. O ! I did not then know what a sweet good lady she was, or I should have cried for joy. She was very short, and, having lost her teeth, her mouth had fallen in. But she was fair, and her eyes were bright, and looked very good humoured ; so that her face was still very agreeable. She was dressed in a black silk gown, with a short white apron ; she had long ruffles, and a white hood over her cap. A little round table stood before her, upon which lay her large Bible ; and a small yellow cat was asleep at her feet.

" Here, Madam," said the servant, going into the parlour, " here is Miss Polly come back."



The old lady smiled, and holding out her hand, the bird hopped upon her finger: and while she stroked it, she called it naughty bird, and asked it why it flew away from its best friends? She then enquired how it was found: and the servant having told her, she arose from her chair, and taking a little gold-headed stick in her hand, "I will go myself," said she, "and speak to the child."

I was by this time in a better humour; and when the old lady came up to me, and began to talk to me in a gentle and kind way, I felt no longer inclined to be cross, but I smiled and curtsied, and gave an account of the way in which I had found the bird as civilly as possible. When the old lady had talked to me for some time, she called her servant, and said to her, "Sarah, I do not know whether my memory may have failed me, but I think there is some resemblance between this child and what my eldest daughter was just before she died."

"It is now forty years or more," replied Sarah, "since my dear young mistress's death, and being then but young, I do not remember her very well."

"But," said the old lady, "look at the picture

of my dear Clary, as it hangs there over the mantle-piece, and tell me if she has not the same white hair and rosy colour, and the same smiling eyes, as this little girl." Then looking kindly at me, she asked me many questions about my parents, and my way of living; and when I had answered them, she gave me the money which had been promised me, telling me to come again to her house four days afterwards.

"But be sure," added she, "before you come again, wash yourself quite clean, and comb your hair; for however poor you may be, there can be no necessity for uncleanness."

Thus did Almighty God provide a friend for me, remembering the virtues of my excellent parents; for, as the holy Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; his seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." Ps. cxii. 1, 2, 6.

So did God in His mercy remember my parents; and when they were no more, He became a father to me, making me strong against those who thought to have tempted me to do

wickedly, and blessing me with the hopes of eternal happiness.

Four days afterwards I went again to Mrs. Neale's house; for Neale was the name of this good lady. When Mrs. Sarah saw that I had taken care to make myself clean, she took me into a little room beside the kitchen, and taking off my old rags, she put on me an entire new suit of clothes, which good Mrs. Neale had caused to be made for me. My new gown was of purple stuff, and I had a blue apron, and white tippet, and round cap.

When I was dressed, she took me by the hand into the parlour, and said, "Here, Madam, is the little girl to whom you are so good."

The old lady got up from her chair; and, having put on her spectacles, she looked at me for some time, and turning me round, said, "'Tis a nice little tidy girl to look at; I wish, Sarah, that as happy a change could be brought about within as we have been able to effect without."

"Ah, Madam," answered Mrs. Sarah, "that is not so easy a matter. There is no great difficulty in washing the outside of the cup, but it is a hard matter to cleanse the inside."

"Sarah," replied Mrs. Neale, "with God all

things are possible. Know you not that the purifying the heart is not the work of man, but that of the Holy Spirit? We will, God permitting, use the appointed means for rescuing this little girl from her present state of sin and ignorance, and will humbly wait God's blessing upon our endeavours."

Then sitting down, and taking my hand as I stood before her, "Little Susan," she said, "you cannot be so ignorant as not to know that there are two places ordained for men after death: the one hell, to which men have doomed themselves by their disobedience; and the other heaven, the way to which is opened for sinners by God the Son, who Himself bore our sins upon the cross. Are you willing to learn this holy way—to forsake your late sinful practices, and to follow your blessed Saviour whithersoever He may lead you? If you are so, I will place you in a school, where you shall be taught the will of God; and we will pray for the divine help, that you may be enabled to practise it."

As I made no objection, though I did not then understand the value of the offer, I was sent to a day-school, where I was taught to read my Bible, and to repeat my catechism. And every Sabbath

I was allowed to dine at Mrs. Neale's, and was taken to church ; after which, Mrs. Neale examined me as to what I had learned during the week, and explained the Scriptures to me.

In this manner I continued to live for about four years ; and was, at the end of that time, able to read with ease to myself, and could do any kind of plain needle-work, and, by the help of Mrs. Sarah, knew a good deal of household business. My aunt was become very infirm, and unable to leave her arm-chair or her bed, and Mrs. Neale put me upon reading the Bible to her ; and taught me that it was my duty to make her comfortable in every way in my power.

When I was about the age of fourteen, my poor aunt died, and, as I now had no home, Mrs. Neale took me entirely into her family, to wait upon her, and to assist Mrs. Sarah, who was getting past her work.

I lived in this family for more than three years, and these were the happiest years of my life. Not a day passed in which I did not receive some good instruction from my dear lady,—some holy counsel, by which, with God's help, to guide my future life. She was particularly anxious to make me sensible of the depravity of my heart,

and of my natural inability to do any thing that is good, and pointed out to me, that, as the people of God were sustained in the wilderness by the manna which, from day to day, was found as dew upon the ground, in like manner I must seek the bread of heaven, as my daily support in my Christian life. She began and ended every lesson by leading and commending me to the Saviour of men; exhorted me habitually to cast myself as a condemned and helpless sinner at the foot of the cross.

At length, it pleased God to take from me my beloved Mrs. Neale, after an illness of a few days. She died at the great age of eighty-two. A few hours before her death, she called me to her bedside, and talked to me in such a way as I never can forget.

"My dear Susan," she said, "in a short time I shall be taken from this world, where I have endured many hard trials, and I trust, through God's mercy, shall go to that happy country where there is no sorrow nor crying.

"Do not weep, my Susan, for I am going, through the merits of my Redeemer, to the dear children and kind husband whom I have long lost; and in a few years, my child, I shall see

you again. Only continue to be mindful of your Saviour, and remember, that those who love Him keep His commandments ; pray for help, that you may not be drawn aside from your duty by the wicked pleasures of this world—pleasure's which endure only for a short season, and the end of which is eternal torment."

She then told me, that, knowing she must soon die, she had been long endeavouring to get a situation for me, but that she had not succeeded ; for people in general objected to me on account of my youth. "But," added this good lady, "I would not have you, my dear child, to seek your fortune when I am no more : I have provided a situation, in which I hope you will improve yourself, and render yourself fit in a few years for a good place.

"You know Mrs. Bennet," said she, "who lives about two miles from the town, and gains a very comfortable living by washing and ironing, and by needle-work. She is an industrious woman, and bears a good character, and has undertaken to receive you into her house for three years ; during which time she will improve you in her business, and you will then be fit to wait upon a lady."

I could not for some time answer, for my tears and sobs almost choked me; but when I could speak, I thanked my dear lady for her kindness, and prayed that I might never forget the good things she had taught me.

She then gave me three guineas to provide me with clothes while I was with Mrs. Bennet, from whom I was too receive no wages; and, also, she left me her Bible and Prayer-Book, and a black stuff gown and petticoat to wear as mourning for her.

The same night this dear lady died; and I remained in the house only till the funeral was over, then taking leave, with many tears, of Mrs. Sarah, who set off the next day to return to Cornwall, where she was born, and where all her family had lived, I went to my new place.

It was a small yet very neat cottage in the midst of a garden; there was behind it a hill covered with tall trees, and before it were many pleasant green meadows, which reached down to the river, through which was a pathway which led to Ludlow. The town itself would have been plainly seen from hence, had it not been for some trees which concealed all the houses, and



only shewed the tower of the church, and part of the old castle.

As I walked from the town, I continued to cry the whole way ; but when I came near the cottage, I wiped away my tears, and strove to put on a more cheerful look. It was a fine summer's evening, and Mrs. Bennet was sitting before the house-door drinking tea. My old companion, Charlotte Owen, of whom I had seen but little since I had lived with Mrs. Neale, was with her, having taken a walk that evening to see her.

"O ! here is Susan Gray," cried Charlotte, as soon as she saw me.

"Welcome, Susan," said Mrs. Bennet ; "come and sit down, my good girl." So saying, she placed a chair for me beside her, and, laying her hand upon mine, added, "I am glad to see you here, child. You and I shall agree vastly well, I am sure ; and if you will mind your work, you shall have no cause to regret the old lady's death, for you shall want for nothing."

"I should be apt," said Charlotte, "if I were in your situation, Susan, to be very glad to see Mrs. Neale laid low, for you must have led a shocking dull life with those two old women."

"O! no, no, no," I said, while the tears came again into my eyes, "I was never so happy in my life as I have been these last two years."

Charlotte laughed, and Mrs. Bennet, staring freely in my face, said, "Come, child, wipe away those tears, and let me see no more of them; nothing spoils beauty like crying."

"Then I never will cry," said Charlotte, "or I shall never get a husband."

Mrs. Bennet laughed, and clapping her on the shoulder, said, "Thou art a wise girl." Then giving me a dish of tea, "Come, cheer up, child," she added; "if you could but look a little more bright, you need not be ashamed to show your face with any one," adding something more to the same purpose, but in a manner so different to anything I had ever seen in her house, that I was startled, and, I suppose, looked surprised, for she laughed, and said, "Why, Susan, Mrs. Sarah has made you as grave and dull as herself. Do you expect to find every one as precise as that poor body was? Why, I used to be afraid of every word I said when I went to iron at Mrs. Neale's."

I made no answer, for my heart sunk within me; but, hastily drinking my tea, I got up, and

said that I was ready to do any work which she might have for me in the house.

"O! sit you down again," answered she; "I have nothing for you to do to-night. Now your old friend Charlotte is with us, we will have a little gossiping."

I sat down, as my mistress desired me; but as she and Charlotte continued to talk in a very light and improper manner, I remained silent.

"Bless me," cried Charlotte, "how grave Susan looks! why, we have affronted her, I suppose, by telling her that she will spoil her beauty by crying."

"No, indeed," I answered, "I am not affronted: but, if you must know the truth, I do not quite like the subject of your discourse, Charlotte. My dear Mrs. Neale pointed out to me many places in the Holy Scriptures, where we are exhorted never to talk about idle and unprofitable things. I could, if you please, show you those texts in my Bible."

"No, for Heaven's sake, child," said Mrs. Bennet; "keep your preachments to yourself. Why, I suppose, by and by, these good Christians will deny us the use of our tongues. Come, let us hear no more of this."

I obeyed, for she looked very angry: and O! how earnestly did I wish that I was not bound to remain with this woman.

Had Mrs. Neale known what she was, I felt assured, she would rather have seen me in my grave, than have placed me under her care. But she always had a good character, and no one, before her betters, spoke with so much modesty and propriety as she had the art to do.

The next subject of their discourse was dress; and Charlotte gave an account to Mrs. Bennet, of the gowns and head dresses which the ladies wore at Ludlow. Mrs. Bennet, in her turn, described some fine dresses which she had lately made up.

Charlotte wished that she could afford to buy a silk gown, and said, she should never be easy till she could get one. Then turning to me, "Susan," she said, "how are you off for clothes? Have you any finery to show us? Come, open your box, and let us see what you have in it."

To prove that I was willing to oblige them in every thing in my power, I unlocked my box, and laid all my clothes before them: but I had nothing fine to show.

"Well," said Mrs. Bennet, when she had

examined all my gowns, "I cannot but wonder that Mrs. Neale, who every body knows was of a very good family, should like a servant about her dressed in such ordinary garments as these. Indeed, Susan, you would look much better, if you would dress a little smarter. I dare say the old lady gave you a little money before she died : now if you would spend a few shillings at the next fair, in buying a bit of ribbon for your hat, and a little trimming for your cloak, and one or two lawn aprons, you would cut a much more creditable figure, and look a vast deal better in every respect."

"I smiled, and wishing to turn the discourse, said, "Well, Madam, if you will bestow these things upon me, I will not refuse to wear them."

"Nay, that is quite out of the question," answered she ; "I have nothing but what I work for, and it is not to be supposed that I should have money to spend upon others. But I know very well that you have money, if you could find in your heart to lay it out."

"I will answer for her," said Charlotte, "that she has plenty. See, how she blushes. She cannot deny that she has money. But all I can say is this, that if she chooses to go about in such

ordinary clothes, she cannot expect that people who cut a better figure will be seen with her."

On hearing these words I felt my anger rise, and was going to answer sharply, but was providentially hindered from committing this sin, by Charlotte's suddenly turning away, and speaking upon other matters.

At length, Charlotte Owen took her leave, and Mrs. Bennet put me in mind that it was time to go to bed, as I must rise early the next morning to my work. She then led me to a small room up stairs, which was within her own; this she told me was to be mine. It had one window, which opened towards the hill behind the house; and from hence I could hear the song of the birds among the trees, and see the flowers which grew beneath in the garden. This room was so small, that it would scarcely contain more than my little flock bed and the box which held my clothes: yet, nevertheless, it was a great comfort to me to have a place which I could call my own, and to which I could retire when I had a leisure hour, to read my Bible, and commune with my God.

But not to make my story too long, I must say, in a few words, that for the first two years

my life with Mrs. Bennet was by no means so uncomfortable as I at first thought it would have been, for my mistress was seldom at home. As I could soon do most of the work she had to do within doors, she used often to go out to iron and work in the genteel families in and about the town; for there was scarcely anything which she could not put her hand to. So that I had very little of her company, and of that light discourse which was so unpleasant to me. When she was at home, it is true that she did not always treat me as kindly as I had been accustomed to be treated with my dear Mrs. Neale and Mrs. Sarah. But we must not expect that everything in this world of trial will always pass on quietly and agreeably. She sometimes was very easy and free with me, as if I were her daughter, rather than her servant; and then, without cause, she would become fretful and sullen, and it would be totally impossible to give her satisfaction. But I endeavoured to remember the words of St. Peter, and, I trust, was patient.

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief,

suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ! but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable unto God. For even hereunto were ye called." 1 Pet. ii. 18-21.

It was my wish to obey my mistress in all she could ask, whether it was reasonable or unreasonable, except when she was so inconsiderate as to require me to do anything sinful. She often requested me to go with her to wakes and merry-makings on a Sabbath, instead of going to church, which I always refused to do ; nor would I ever buy any fine clothes to please her.

Although I was apparently without a friend, and living with a woman who was entirely without the fear of God, yet my heavenly Father so ordered things, that I was, for a long time, preserved from temptation. My business lay but little in Ludlow. I had full employment at home, and few persons came to our house, unless it might be Charlotte Owen, who sometimes brought with her a young man, the son of a neighbour, with whom she was so indiscreet, sometimes, as to walk in the fields and lanes about the town.



But I had little to say to Charlotte when she came. She was not fond of me: and I have since thought, that I had it not enough at heart to try to win her to God. Whenever she was with my mistress on a Sunday evening, I used to shut myself up in my little room, if I was not wanted below.

I had now lived with Mrs. Bennet more than two years and a half, and was looking forward with hope to the time when I should leave her service, and enter into that of some person who feared God; when, one evening, towards the latter end of last April, my mistress having been in Ludlow the whole day, I was alone in the cottage ironing some linen, I remember that, as it was becoming dusk, many very serious thoughts passed through my mind. I considered how many persons whom I had known and loved during my short life had passed from a temporal to an eternal state; and I considered how soon, even in the common course of nature, I also should be numbered among those who are departed.

While my mind was filled with these reflections, some one tapped suddenly at the window, and, before I could distinguish who it was,

Charlotte Owen called out, "What! all alone, Susan? Make haste, and let me in."

I was surprised at the free manner in which she spoke to me, but I opened the window, and endeavoured to speak as cheerfully to her as if we had always been the best friends.

"I came for a little chat," she said, "will you let me in!"

I answered, that I thanked her; but at the same time I advised her, as it was getting late, to make the best of her way home, as it was late for a young woman to be seen abroad.

"There again," she said, "you come in with your scruples, Susan, and your over-niceness. You have lived with the old woman till you are good for nothing."

So saying, she went round to the door, and knocked very loudly at it, till I unbolted it; for when I was alone I always fastened it as night drew on.

"Why, Charlotte," I said, "you seem very merry this evening," and I invited her to sit down by my ironing-board.

"Merry," she answered, as she took her seat "yes, to be sure: the town's all alive. The soldiers are in town, I suppose you know that,

you may hear the drums and fifes down here very plain ; and we had a dance yesterday at the Blue-Boar. My mother and I were both there ; and the long room was so full, that you could hardly squeeze in ; and the women were all so smart ! I am sure you would have liked it : but here you are shut up, and are so dull. Don't you think your mistress would let you come among us ? ”

“ Perhaps she would,” I answered, “ but I shall never ask her leave : for to tell you the truth, Charlotte, I do not think that modest women have any business at such merry-makings.”

“ Bless me ! and why not ? ” cried Charlotte. “ Why, all the gentlefolks have their dances and plays, and routs ; and I do not see why we should not have them too. Do tell me where the harm of them lies ? ”

“ I can scarcely tell you, Charlotte,” I answered, “ for I never was at a dance, or a wake, or a fair, or a show, in my life. But will you own to me, whether you ever went to any of these places, without hearing bad language, without meeting with bold or drunken men, who talk familiarly to you, who utter profane or wicked jests, and take God's name in vain ? Now do answer me this question, Charlotte.”

"I don't know, I can't tell: why, why—" said Charlotte.

"Answer me either yes or no, my dear Charlotte," I said. "Surely, if you do not meet with bad people in these places, you may say so; and if you do meet with them, you must agree with me that they are not fit places for good young women."

"How scrupulous! how over-nice you are!" said Charlotte.

"How can we be too scrupulous in these things, Charlotte?" answered I. "Can we love God too much? or serve him too well? Is it not said in the Bible, 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon!'" Matt. vi. 24.

Charlotte made no answer; and for some time, she sat quite silent. At last she said, "Susan, when were you in town last?"

"The day before yesterday, I fetched this linen from Mrs. Nichols," I answered.

"Did you see the Captain, then?" she asked.

"What Captain?" I said: "I know no Captain."

"Why, have you not heard of the Captain who is just come to town? Where can you have lived this last fortnight? He is to come to lodge at Mr. Smith's, the mercer; and he is the finest, handsomest, freest, pleasantest gentleman I ever saw in my life. He seems to regard his money no more than the stones in the streets; and you cannot think how condescending and obliging he is. He smiles, and is so gracious when one meets him anywhere, and speaks so kindly."

"And speaks so kindly!" I repeated. "Oh! Charlotte, what business could a gentleman, a stranger too, have to speak to a poor girl in your situation?"

She coloured: "A poor girl, indeed!" she answered. "I like that, Susan; a poor girl, truly! I am no servant."

"Perhaps not," I answered; "but you must know that the gentlefolks do not look upon you as their equal, nor will a gentleman treat you as such. You may be assured, that when a gentleman speaks freely to a young woman in your state of life, he means no good."

"Who says that the Captain spoke freely to me, I should wish to know?" said Charlotte.

"Did you not say yourself," I asked, "that he smiled, and spoke kindly when you met him?"

"Well, and suppose he did," answered she; "and suppose he should think me handsome; and suppose he should think of making me his lady, where would be the wonder?"

"Oh, Charlotte!" said I, "gentlemen are not so ready to raise up poor girls to be their wives. Do you think, whatever they may say, that they could like women in our humble station better than the fine ladies whom they see every day? How are we fit to appear in the company of gentlefolks? can we talk of the things which they talk of? are we fit, with our homely and countrified discourse, to converse with learned people? Do not let us expect that our betters will raise us to be their equals. If a decent young man in our own station offers himself, we may listen to him; but if we think of making ourselves greater than our neighbours, we shall fall lower than we now are."

"I am sure I don't want to raise myself," said Charlotte. "I did nothing to make the Captain notice me: "I was walking very quietly down the lane, from the town towards the

meadows, when he first thought proper to speak to me ; I am sure I did not speak first."

"But, perhaps, you looked at him," I said.

"Looked at him, truly !" replied she ; "why, who would not look at so fine a gentleman ? You cannot think how very handsome he is."

"And do you think, Charlotte," said I, "because you did not speak, that this gentleman could not find out what passed in your mind ? When we are angry, do not our looks show our displeasure, although we open not our mouths ? You suffered your mind to be full of this stranger ; you looked at him and admired him : and he, no doubt, discovered these your thoughts by your looks, although you supposed them hidden by your silence. If he, therefore, treated you with any freedom, it was your own fault ; and you have as much reason to blame yourself, as if you had tempted him to do so by speaking boldly to him."

"Upon my word, Susan," answered she, "you take finely upon you, indeed ! Who made you ruler over me, that you should dare to find fault with me at this rate ? What, must I neither look nor speak ? I suppose you would have me walk about with my eyes shut."

"I beg your pardon, Charlotte," said I, "if I have spoken harshly to you ; but you were the friend of my early days, and although we have been but little together of late, yet I cannot but love you, and I wish, if possible, to convince you that you allow yourself in liberties, which you may think innocent, but for which I fear that you will be punished, perhaps, very severely after death. For although you are not so learned as the gentlefolks are, yet you have been taught to read your Bible ; and it is your own fault, if you are ignorant of what is the duty of a Christian. Surely, you have read in the Holy Scripture, that 'every man that hath hope in God, purifieth himself as He is pure ;' and again, 'he that committeth sin is of the devil.'" 1 John iii. 3, 8.

"And pray, what sin have I committed ?" asked Charlotte.

"You have allowed your thoughts to be employed, my dear Charlotte," said I "by very vain and improper subjects. Your heart has been occupied by this stranger, although God has commanded you to 'set your affections on things above, not on the things on the earth.' Col. iii. 2. You have broken this commandment



of God, and are exposing yourself to great danger; and unless you call upon your Almighty Saviour, to give you grace to overcome this temptation, I fear that you will make yourself not only miserable in this world, but in that which is to come. For the holy apostle St. Paul says, 'To be carnally-minded is death.'" Rom. viii. 6.

Charlotte made no answer, but stared at me; and at that moment my mistress knocked at the door.

Charlotte ran to open it, very glad, I believe, to break off her discourse with me.

In came Mrs. Bennet, with a large roll of fine Irish cloth under her arm, which she laid upon a small table; and, throwing herself on a chair beside it, "Now, girls," said she, "guess for whom I am going to make that set of shirts: look at the cloth first; see how fine and even it is, and tell me who you think it fit for."

Charlotte said, she presumed it was for the 'Squire of the next village; and I guessed, the worthy Dean, the Rector of our parish.

Mrs. Bennet laughed, and, clapping her hand on the cloth, said, "you are both mistaken; it is for a finer gentleman than either of these. Why,

Charlotte, I wonder you cannot think of him for I have a pretty shrewd guess that he is often uppermost in your head," and then she laughed again.

I returned to my ironing without saying another word ; and Charlotte, after thinking some time, cried, " Why, surely it is not for the Captain ? "

" You have it now," said my mistress. " Mr. Smith called me in to-day, as I was passing by, and told me that the Captain wanted to speak to me. I wondered what he could have to say to me ; but it was about these shirts : he desired to have two of them made and washed by next Sabbath morning. So, Susan, you must set to work by daybreak ; you have but three days to do them in, for I cannot help you. I am going out to-morrow, and we must not disoblige his honour for worlds."

" Oh, Mrs. Bennet ! " said Charlotte, " if you will give me leave, I will come to-morrow and help Susan ; it would be a pleasure to me to work for so fine a gentleman."

" I thank you, Charlotte," said I, " I shall want no help."

" Mind that," said my mistress, " she takes

such pleasure in working for this smart youth, that she will not have your help, Charlotte."

Charlotte laughed.

But I will not repeat all their free jests. Oh, how truly did the wise king Solomon say, that "the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. Prov. xv. 26.

Charlotte insisted upon helping me in my work, and, as it was very late, Mrs. Bennet asked her to stay with her all night.

When I had finished my ironing, and had got them their suppers, I asked leave to go to bed, that I might hear no more of their vain discourse; and when I was alone in my little room, I knelt down and besought my Saviour to remember me, and to save me from being corrupted by this evil world.

Early next morning, I began my work before Mrs. Bennet and Charlotte came to breakfast.

As soon as breakfast was over, my mistress went out, and Charlotte and I sat down to work before the door. We were for some time silent; at length, Charlotte, throwing down her work, took out of her pocket a small pattern of flowered silk, which she showed me, asking me how I liked it.

"It is very pretty," said I.

"Should you not like a gown of it," said she.

"No," I answered, "I think that a silk gown would not become a poor servant.

"Why, as you are a servant, it might not suit you; but I shall very soon have a gown of it," said she. "Mrs Hall, the pawnbroker, has one to part with, as good as new, and she has promised to let me have it for a guinea and a half."

"A guinea and a half!" I cried, "what a large sum! you will never be able to raise it."

"And why not!" said Charlotte, "I have already given Mrs. Hall half-a-guinea towards it, and I know that I shall soon be able to raise the guinea. But you must not say anything about it, for my mother is not to know at present,"

"O, Charlotte," said I, "what are you about to do? in what way can you get the money unknown to your mother? And can you be so mean and foolish as to deceive your mother for the sake of a silk gown?"

"Bless me! why, what is the matter now?" cried she. "Why, I shall show my mother the gown as soon as I have got it; and tell her that

I paid for it out of the money which my uncles, and aunts, and grandfather had given me, and which I shall say I saved up. And she will not ask many questions, for she will be so pleased to see me so smart."

"And can you resolve to offend God," I said, "to deceive your mother, and, perhaps, to be punished for ever in another world, for the sake of a silk gown, which, in a few years, will fade and wear away, and will be good for nothing but to be thrown aside?"

"As to deceiving my mother," answered Charlotte, "I am very easy about that; for I shall only do to her as she does to others, even to the very best of her friends. For not a day passes, to my knowledge, but she cheats some of her customers; and as to telling lies, she minds them not the least, when she can get a few pence by them."

"But," said I, "if your poor mother does wrong, that is no reason you should imitate her. Remember these words, my dear Charlotte, which are taken from the Holy Bible, 'All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' Rev. xxi. 8.

"But I am resolved," answered she, "to have

the gown, so you may spare your preaching, only I beg you to say nothing about it."

"Will you answer me one question, Charlotte?" said I. "How did you get that half-guinea which you have already given for your gown? I know that but last week you told Mrs. Bennet that you had spent all you had in the world on a new hat."

"Oh, I am not obliged to tell you that," said she, laughing: "but all I will say is, that I got it where I hope to get more."

"I begin to be much afraid for you," said I: "this love of fine clothes will one day or other end in some sad evil. Indeed, my dear Charlotte, I beg you to think no more of this silk gown; be assured, that if you could even get it honestly, no one would honour you the more for being dressed above your station; any undue degree of finery shows vanity and pride, if not something worse. Nor is it right for us to spend all that we have upon ourselves, little as that may be. If we deny ourselves some few pieces of finery, or even some few comforts, that we may give a little to those who are in greater want than ourselves, God will reward us tenfold; but if we greedily and selfishly spend all we can

earn upon ourselves, our Lord, I fear, will say to us, at the great day of judgment, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Matt. xxv. 41-33.

"I think as you do, Susan," said Charlotte, "that rich people ought to spare some of their abundance to give to the poor; but you know that we are not rich."

"As to you, Charlotte," I answered, "who have so many of the good things of this world, who have money to spend on gloves, and ribbons, and laces, and fine gowns; can you say that you have nothing to spare to the poor? I have less than you possess, and am obliged to work hard for what I have; but like the poor widow, I think it my duty to give my mite to the poor. And I remember what St. Paul says to the man who has been a thief: 'Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' Eph. iv.

28. And I could repeat to you twenty other texts in the Bible, to exhort and command us to take pity on the poor, and to love our neighbours as well as ourselves : which we cannot be said to do, when we lay out all the money we can earn in decking ourselves forth, or pampering ourselves with delicate food."

"You have a vast deal to say, Susan," said Charlotte: "but I do not think, with all your fine talking, that I shall give up my silk gown."

"Now, my dear Charlotte," said I, "if you promise to think no more of this silk gown, and will, for a few years be content to wear humble garments, and to give of what you save to those who are in need, and to follow Him, who, for our sakes, took upon him the fashion of a servant, I think I can promise, that, at the end of that time, you shall have a finer gown than any lady's in the kingdom ; yes, a richer gown than any queen ever wore on a birth-night."

Charlotte smiled, and asked me what I meant.

"This gown," said I, "that I promise you, shall be as white as snow, and as bright as the sun ; it will never soil and never wear away ; no moths shall ever corrupt it, nor shall any thieves steal it from you."



"Why, Susan," said Charlotte, "of what are you talking? I do not understand you."

"And with this beautiful gown," added I, "you shall wear a crown of precious stones, as bright as the stars in the heavens. Oh, my dear Charlotte! if you would but think less of this world with all its vanities, if you would resist its temptations, and endeavour to serve your God, you shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of my Father, and enjoy pleasures for evermore in the presence of God."

"Oh, now I understand you," cried Charlotte: "you had quite puzzled me with your shining gown. It reminds me of the fine silver lace upon the Captain's waistcoat; you have no notion how handsome he looked in it."

I believe that I surprised her a little; for the moment she mentioned the Captain, I got up and carried my chair into the house, where I sat down, at some distance from her.

"What is the matter, Susan?" said she; "why do you run away?"

"Because I do not choose to hear anything said about that gentleman. What business have we poor girls to be talking and joking about a Captain? I heard too much of these jests, Char-

lotte, last night; and, whatever you may think of me, I am resolved that I will hear none of them to-day."

She got up, and coming to the door of the house, stood leaning with her back against the post, laughing at me for some minutes. But I made no answer, remembering that it is said, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

While she continued to laugh at me, two young men belonging to the town came running through the wood, down the side of the garden. As they passed by the house they saw Charlotte, and one of them called to her; the other went on to the town.

She no sooner heard his voice, than she ran to the wicket, and there stood talking and laughing with him till dinner was ready.

As soon as dinner was over, she told me that she was tired of work, and, wishing me a good day, took her leave.

I had finished two of the shirts, and washed them on Saturday evening; and on Sabbath morning, it being a fine day, my mistress laid the

shirts in a neat basket, and, strewing them over with lavender, ordered me to take them to the Captain's. "You will not have time, Susan," said she, "to get back to the village church; therefore, dress yourself before you go, and, when you have delivered the linen, you may leave your basket at Mercer Smith's, and go to church in town."

I accordingly dressed myself neatly, and, taking the basket under my arm, was just going out at the garden-gate, when my mistress, calling after me, said, "Susan, you must ask to see the Captain himself, and deliver the linen to him; and if he asks you what he is to pay for the work, you must say, whatever his honour pleases; for, you know, we must not fix a price to so great a gentleman."

I thought that my mistress knew better how to deal with gentlefolks than I could do, who was a stranger to the world. Therefore, when I came to Mercer Smith's door, I knocked, and asked to see the Captain.

The Captain's servant came, and asked me if he could not take the message to his master.

"No," I said. "My mistress ordered me to see his honour myself."

I was then led through the shop into a hall, where I stood for some minutes ; at last, the parlour-door was opened, and the Captain came out. When I saw his honour, I began to be frightened ; for he was, indeed, a very fine gentleman ; I looked upon the ground, and at first I could scarcely speak.

“ Young woman,” said he, “ what do you want with me ? ”

“ I hope that your honour will pardon me,” I said ; “ but my mistress ordered me to bring the linen to you.”

“ Hold up your head, young woman,” said the gentleman. “ I cannot hear what you say.”

I raised my head, and repeated what I had said before, but I was very much frightened.

When he saw that I was frightened, he smiled, and said very kindly, “ Tell your mistress, my good young woman, that I am obliged to her for obeying my orders so exactly. You are her servant, I suppose. Pray what may your name be ? ”

“ Susan Gray,” I answered.

“ And where do you live ? ” he said.

“ In the cottage by the river-side, under the coppice,” I replied. I then made a courtesy, and

was going away, but he called me back, and asked me what he was to pay for the work.

I answered, as I had been told, "Whatever your honour pleases."

He immediately offered me half-a-guinea. I was surprised, and said, "Oh, Sir, this is too much, by far. My mistress would not take half of it."

"Then," said he, "my good Susan, do you pay your mistress what you think she might expect, and keep the rest yourself."

"No, no, no, Sir," said I, refusing to take the money. "I am only her servant, and have no right to the profits of her work."

The Captain looked very hard indeed at me when I spoke these words; and when I had done he said, "Your mistress is very happy, my good Susan, in so honest a servant. But you must take the whole of this money for yourself. When I see your mistress I will pay her for the work."

"Indeed, Sir, I cannot take it. I thank your honour for your generosity, but I assure you that I want for nothing, and I have no right to take money which I have not earned." So saying, I made another courtesy, and hastened away.

When I got into the street, it was time to go to church.

While I was at church, I could not help thinking how very odd it was that the Captain should offer me money, wondering that so great and fine a gentleman should talk to so poor a girl as myself in so free a manner.

These thoughts so entirely filled my mind, that I fear I knew little of what passed in the church; and thus, at the very time when it behoved me to put on the whole armour of God, I was entirely off my guard: but faithful was He who called me. 1 Thess. v. 24. As the arms of the mother are a protection on each side of the careless and wayward child, so did His everlasting arms uphold me, though I knew it not. I, who had blamed Charlotte so freely but a few days past, had certainly fallen under the same temptation, had not my Almighty Saviour upheld me. "So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before Thee. Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Psalm lxxiii. 22-24.

As I returned home, I came into a narrow

lane which led from the town to the meadows in which our house stands. At the end of this lane was a stile, on each side of which grew some very tall trees, whose green boughs made a kind of bower over the head.

When I came in view of this stile, I saw a gentleman sitting upon it reading a letter ; but I could not tell, because of the shade of the trees, who he was.

I would have gone back, and taken another way home, that I might not give him the trouble of rising to let me pass, but I supposed that my mistress would by this time be come home from church, and would be in want of her dinner. So I walked on.

But when I came near the stile, I was much surprised to find that this gentleman was the Captain. He went on reading the letter, and never moved from his seat till I was come up close to him. I stood waiting for some moments. At last I begged his honour's leave to pass over the stile.

The first time I spoke, he seemed not to hear me, and when I again asked him to give me leave to pass, he lifted up his eyes from the letter which he was reading, and, without moving from his

place, "Your servant, Susan," he said. "Where may you be going, my good girl?"

"I am going home, Sir," I said, "and beg your leave to pass."

"I will let you go presently, but first you must answer me a few questions."

"Sir," I replied, "you can have no business with me; if you wish to speak to my mistress she shall call upon you at any time you shall please to fix."

"I have nothing to say to the old woman," answered he, "but I want to have a little discourse with you."

As I found he was so rude, I turned back, and was going to take the other way into the meadow, although it was above half a mile round. But he, jumping from the stile, followed me, and said something which I thought very impertinent. Upon which I said to him, "If you forget, Sir, that you are a gentleman, I shall forget also that I am a servant, and will tell you very plainly what I think of you."

"And what do you think of me, little Susan," said he, laughing.

"I think, Sir," I answered, "that you are a very wicked man; and although I may have



no friend on earth to take my part, yet God Almighty will not suffer such behaviour as this to go unpunished."

So saying, I pushed hastily by him, and, by means of running as fast as I could, was soon out of sight.

When I got home, I found the door locked, and no one within. I soon opened the door with a key which I had of my own; and as my mistress did not return, I ate my dinner, and prepared to go to our little village church.

"I had not been returned from church above an hour, before my mistress came in with Charlotte Owen, and two or three more young women, and as many young men, with whom she had been taking a walk to a village some miles distant, where they had dined together at a public-house.

"Susan," said she, as soon as she entered, "make the fire burn, and set on the tea-kettle, for we must have some tea as soon as possible, and set us a table and chairs at the door."

I did as I was ordered; but while I was getting tea ready within doors, I was shocked at the loud laughing and jesting of my mistress and her company.

The young men, who I found had drunk a few glasses of ale more than they were used to, were extremely free and bold in their manner ; and I was very sorry to see that not only Charlotte and the other young women, but also my mistress, encouraged them, by their foolish tittering and still more foolish jokes, to behave in a manner which must be highly offensive to God, who has commanded Christian men to treat "the elder women as mothers ; the younger as sisters, with all purity." 1 Tim. v. 2.

Having brought the tea-things, and prepared everything for the tea, my mistress bade me bring a chair, and take my place with the company.

I thanked her, but said, I would beg to be excused.

"Nay, don't refuse, Susan," said one of the young men, whose name was William Bell : "we must have your company. Here, take this chair by me ; come, we are vastly merry."

"I see you are merry," I said, "but I shall beg not to make one among you."

"And why not ?" they all cried at once.

"Oh, do not oblige me to say," I answered.

"What, we are not good enough for you, I presume !" said Charlotte.

"None of these airs, Susan," said my mistress; "a fine lady, in truth, you are, with scarcely a rag to your back, or a shilling in your pocket, that you should turn up your nose thus at your betters. Sit you down this minute," added she, with a very naughty word.

William Bell at the same time took hold of my gown, and was going to pull me down into the chair by him, when I, struggling hard, escaped into the house, and, leaving my mistress and her company to wait upon themselves, ran into my own little room; where I shut the door, and, throwing myself on my knees, prayed to God to protect me. "O my God," I cried, "I am surrounded by snares and temptations; deliver me, I pray Thee, from the evils which encompass me."

My mistress did not call me down until all the company were gone, except Charlotte Owen, who complained of a headache, and begged to stay all night at the cottage.

"Susan," said Mrs. Bennet, as soon as I came down, "any other mistress but myself would turn a servant out of doors who had behaved as you have done; but, in consideration of your having always been an honest girl, I forgive you

this once. I cannot say that I should pardon you so easily, if you were to show any of these saucy airs again. Surely, my friends are fit company for my servant."

"I should think so, in truth," said Charlotte, who was sitting in an arm-chair, leaning her head upon her hand.

I thanked my mistress for forgiving me, and then turning to Charlotte, to prove that I was not in an ill humour, but that I had only left the company for the sake of my God and my religion, "My dear Charlotte," I said, "I am sorry to see you so poorly."

She made no answer; and my mistress, presently afterwards, said, with a laugh, "Well, Susan, and what did the Captain say to you?"

"I do not like the Captain," I answered; "and with your leave, I never will go to his lodgings again."

"Bless me! and what now?" cried my mistress. And Charlotte, at the same time, raising her head, fixed her eyes on me.

I then told them what had passed between me and the gentleman. As soon as I had finished the story, Mrs. Bennet cried out, "And were you so rude, Susan, as not to take the money? Don't

you know that it is the greatest affront a servant can put upon a gentleman, to refuse his money? Why, the Captain will never forgive you! How could you, Susan, behave in such a manner?"

"I did not want the money," I answered.

"Not want it!" said my mistress: "why, you have not a decent gown to your back. Every body says that you would be well looking enough, if you dressed but smartly. But as it is, you are such a dowdy, such a country Joan, no one will look upon you. Is it not so, Charlotte?"

"Don't talk to her about it," said Charlotte; "she can't help her poverty: those who knew her aunt don't wonder at the figure she cuts—poor, low creature! And, as to the Captain, I am sure he never would offer her money: and if he did, I am sure she never would refuse it. Don't let her deceive you, Mrs. Bennet, with her fine stories."

"Nay, I do not think the girl would tell a lie," answered my mistress: "I have always found her honest enough. But now, do tell me, Susan, why did you not take the Captain's money?"

"Because," I said, "although I am poor, yet

I fear my God, and I will never take any money but such as I can get in an honest manner. Did God see fit, He could make me richer in one day than I should become, were I for a long life to use every wicked means, and every lying and deceitful art, to get money. For, as the Bible says, "It is an easy thing for the Lord of a sudden to make a poor man rich." Eccles. xi. 21. I know not for what reason the Captain offered me the half-guinea; but I knew it could be for no good reason, for I have done him no service, and stood not in need of charity."

"Not stand in need of charity!" said my mistress; "that may be as you think: to be sure, you have bread to eat, but you certainly want for many necessities. Why, as I said before, you have not a decent gown to your back: you have not one that has not been patched in half-a-dozen places; and since you came to me, you have not had a new hat."

"If I am poor," I said, "I cannot help it."

"Not help it!" said my mistress: "did you not refuse money to-day? But pride and poverty often go together."

"Pride!" I repeated, and I fear I said it rather warmly; "I am not proud: though I

trust that I am above receiving money which can be given with no good intention."

Charlotte took me up sharply: "And how do you know," said she, "that it was with no good intention that the Captain offered you the money? I understand what you would be at, Susan; but it is nothing but envy at seeing people better dressed than yourself."

She said much more to the same purpose, and seemed so very hot, that I really was surprised, till I perceived that she had on the very silk gown which she had been talking of some days past, and for the purchase of which she had, no doubt, received money from the Captain. I was so injudicious, because this was not a time for it, when she was in the height of her anger, to charge her with what she had done; and though I hope I did not do it in a rude way, yet she grew so angry upon it, that my mistress thought it time to interfere, and bid me go up to bed.

I obeyed, and, when I got into my own room, burst into a violent fit of tears. I was not pleased with myself: I felt that the past day had not been well spent; that my mind was not in a good state; and that I had spoken to Charlotte

with impropriety, and not in a way which was likely to lead her back to God. I had not, as in days past, those pleasant and peaceful feelings of confidence in God which had made my little room a most sweet and delightful abode to me. I felt forsaken and alone: and yet I had no inclination to pray; no desire to call upon that beloved Saviour who had hitherto been my comforter.

I sat at the foot of my bed, and for some time continued to shed tears, not of humility, but rather of passion and discontent. Charlotte and my mistress were talking below (for Charlotte was to stay with Mrs Bennet all night), but their voices were so low that I could hardly hear them. It was almost dusk, and I know not how long I might have remained in that rebellious state, when He of whom it is said, "Before they call I will answer" (Isaiah lxxv. 24), so ordered it that some poor holy man, passing along the lane which is at the back of the garden, should bethink himself of beguiling the way by singing the praises of God. It was an old psalm-tune, which I remembered to have heard my father sing when I was a very little child, and I had heard it again never since that time.



I listened to the sound, as it drew nearer, and eagerly strove to catch every note, till the singer had passed away ; and such was the effect on my mind, it seemed to me as if the days of my childhood had returned again. I could almost have fancied that I saw my father and mother again ; and the Holy Spirit of God, for I can think no less, brought them to my remembrance. Many pious lessons which I had received from these beloved parents, and which had almost entirely passed from my mind, or till now, at best, had been very imperfectly remembered ; much, also, that dear Mrs. Neale had said to me before her death was at this time brought before me, as strongly as if she were still speaking ; and my conscience began to smite me with having profited so little by all that these dear friends had done for me. From these thoughts I was led on to think of Him who died for me, and of all that He had endured for my sake ; and, like St. Peter, I began to weep bitterly : and I trust that these tears were shed in a humbler spirit than those which had just before flowed from my eyes.

I was enabled this night to give myself up to God, and to trust Him with the future events of my life ; humbly beseeching him not to leave me,

in any time of trial, to my own strength, for I had found, by the past day's experience, that I was as little able to endure temptation as poor Charlotte, whom I had so freely censured. After this my mind became more easy, and my sleep was sweet.

The next morning, I expected that my mistress would have looked cool upon me ; but quite the contrary, for while I was setting the teacups for breakfast, she came down, and taking up Charlotte Owen's new hat, which had been left the night before on a chair, and placing it on my head, she raised her hands and eyes, as if she was mightily astonished, and cried, "Is it possible? I could not have thought that any head-dress could have made such a difference ! Why, Susan, you look as handsome as the queen of May in that hat. I protest that I should hardly have known you again. You must, indeed you must, have such a hat as that. I do think, if you were to buy the silk and make it up yourself, it would not come to more than five shillings; and you cannot think how very handsome you would look in it."

"Whether I look handsome or not," was my answer, "I cannot afford to buy such a hat ; for

I really have not the money to spare. My dear Mrs. Neale gave me three guineas when I came to you ; but I have now been with you nearly three years, and in that time my shoes have cost me a guinea, and, with a little linen which I have bought, and a common stuff gown, and a few other necessaries, I have not much more than half-a-guinea left, and this I shall want, to enable me to make a decent appearance, if I should be so happy as to get a good place when my time is out with you."

"What! have you so much as half-a-guinea left?" said my mistress; "and yet you will not purchase a hat, in which you would look so very handsome. Come, now, I will tempt you," said she; "here is a half-crown towards it. I make it a free gift to you." So saying, she held out the money.

I was puzzled to think what could have made her, all at once, so generous, for she had never before offered me so much as a penny. I looked at the half-crown for a minute, as she held it towards me, and then at the hat, and at last I said, "I thank you, Madam, for your very kind offer; but if I am to spend the money upon a hat, and to add another half-crown of my own to it, I will beg leave not to take it."

She looked angry, and, putting the money immediately into her pocket, turned round upon her heel, and said some few words which I could not hear.

"I am afraid," I said, "that you will think me very ungrateful for not accepting your offer; but I am sure that I am much obliged to you; and, if you please, I will tell you my reasons for so doing."

"Well," said she, "and what may those reasons be?"

"In the first place," I said, "I was taught by my dear Mrs Neale, that it becomes not a Christian woman to be fond of vain ornaments. I could show you many places in the Bible, where we are exhorted not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world. It becomes every one of us to dress decently, and with the utmost cleanliness; but surely, whatever the rich may think it right to do, it becomes not a poor servant to spend her little pittance on needless finery."

"Certainly not," said my mistress. "I would not have you spend all you have on a hat. But if you were a little better dressed, Susan, perhaps some young tradesman or farmer might be taken

with you, (for you are a good-looking girl), and might choose you for his wife. And do you think, child, that if you could get a good husband, by spending a few extraordinary shillings, that the money would be thrown away?" And then the wicked woman laughed, for indeed I must call her a wicked woman.

"If God sees fit," I answered, "that I should marry, in His due time He will provide me with a worthy husband. But this is, at present, no concern of mine. I trust in God, and leave Him to do what He pleases with me."

"You always have a mighty deal to say for yourself, Susan," said my mistress. "But come now, think better of it; here, I offer you the half-crown again. Have you a mind to take it towards buying the hat!"

"If you will give it to me towards a pair of shoes, or a coloured apron, I will thank you," I said, and held out my hand to receive it.

"No, no," said my mistress, "that will not do. You shall have it, if you please, for the hat, but for nothing else; for I want to see you with something smarter on your head than that old-fashioned straw hat."

"Ah! why," said I, "should you tempt me to

these vanities? If, for God's sake, you do not forbear trying to draw me aside, yet, for your own, you should rejoice that I am not fond of the fine things of this world, rather than endeavour to fill my mind with the love of them.

"Now, suppose, my dear mistress," added I, coming nearer to her, and smiling, to show that all I said was in the greatest good humour; "I were all at once to become vain, and to prefer fine clothes, and to be admired by men, rather than to be loved by God; immediately, for the sake of getting these things which were become so dear to me, I should pilfer you in a thousand little ways; nothing that you have in the house would be safe; but I should be changing your bread for a ribbon, your cheese for a bit of a lace, a candle for a fine pin, a piece of soap for a pair of buckles, and so on; and then, as it would be no use to show my fine clothes to the owls and the bats, the horses and the cows, whenever you were safe out of the way, instead of doing your work well, I should hurry it over in a slovenly manner, and fly off to town, to show myself at the fairs and the markets. So I will not, if you please, buy the hat; lest, when I have got one fine thing, I should wish

for another to wear with it, and so never be content."

My mistress made no answer, for at that moment Charlote Owen made her appearance : and they sat down together to breakfast.

After breakfast, they both left the cottage ; my mistress having given me a task to do, and told me she should not return till night.

I was alone all that day, and busy at work till, just as it was getting dusk, and the moon began to show her face above the tops of the hills, I took a walk in the garden, to enjoy the fresh air. It was a most pleasant evening, and the violets and other flowers of spring filled the breezes with their most sweet smell. A nightingale was sitting among the branches of the trees at the top of the hill, and her voice sounded very melodiously in the cottage-garden.

As I walked up and down, I thought of the many snares and dangers to which those persons are exposed, who have not the happiness to have good parents. I had not one friend in the world ; I was daily tempted to evil by those that surrounded me ; those whose duty it was to guard and protect me, seemed to take a pleasure in exposing me to danger. I feared most, also.

from my own corrupt nature ; for although I tried to fight against them, yet evil thoughts were rising continually in my mind : sometimes I felt weary of living, shut up in the cottage, without having any one to speak to, except bad persons, who constantly made a mockery of me ; and sometimes I could scarcely help fretting and re-pining, and thinking that I was dealt hardly by.

I prayed to God to forgive me if ever I had murmured, or forgot to trust in His mercy. I prayed him to enable me to resist the evil suggestions of my corrupt heart, and, above all things, never to leave me nor forsake me ; for I felt, though utterly helpless in myself, in Him I was strong.

“ Ah, what does it signify,” I said, as I looked up to the skies, all bright and sparkling with thousands and thousands of stars, “ whether I am happy or miserable, for the few short years which I am to spend in this world ? I am now young, it is true, but when I am thrice my present age, I shall be an old woman, and must soon expect to lay me down in the grave.

“ O my dear father and mother ! and my beloved Mrs. Neale ! you are now happier in heaven, in the presence of your God and Saviour ;



you are no longer poor, weak, human creatures, but immortal and glorious spirits ; all tears are wiped from your eyes ; you have rested from labour and sorrow for ever."

While these thoughts were passing in my mind, I sat me down before the cottage door, and sung an hymn which had been taught me by Mrs. Neale.

I had scarcely done singing, when I saw a gentleman open the garden-gate, and come towards me.

It was nearly dusk, but when he came near to me, I knew him to be the Captain. Without waiting to think what I ought to do, I started up from my seat, and running into the house, was going to pull the door after me, and fasten it ; but the gentleman was too quick for me : before I could draw the bolt, he pushed open the door and walked in. It was almost dark in the house ; there was no other light except from a few embers which glowed upon the hearth.

"My dear Susan," said the Captain, coming up to me, "why did you run away ? why are you so frightened ?"

"Pray, Sir, pardon me," I said, making a low courtesy.

"Is your mistress at home? I wished to see her," said the Captain.

"No, Sir," I said, "she is not. But, if you please, she shall call upon you to-morrow morning at any hour you may fix."

"No," he answered; "what I have to say to her is of little consequence."

Then he added, looking very hard in my face, "You have a very sweet voice, Susan. Do you always, when alone, sing hymns? Do you never sing any other than holy songs?"

"No, Sir," I answered; "I know no other."

"By whom were you brought up? Where do your parents live?" he inquired.

I told him that I had no father nor mother.

He asked me many questions about the way in which I had been brought up; and when I had answered them, "Sir," I said, "will you pardon a poor servant, but, as it is very late might I ask you, if you have any message which I could deliver to my mistress?"

"What, my little Susan," he said, "you wish me to leave you; you, perhaps, think that your mistress would be displeased, if she found me here."

"Why, perhaps, Sir," I answered, looking

11.1

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...his

message : at last, when I reminded him that it was late, and that it did not become me, in my humble state, to enter into discourse with a gentleman : "My pretty Susan," he said, "although you are in the low state of a servant, yet there are many ladies who might be proud to be like you ; nor is there any lady whom I have seen in all my travels, that I should prefer to you for a wife. Had I not a very severe father, who would refuse to give me one shilling if I were to marry without his leave, I would marry you, Susan, to-morrow, and think myself the happiest man in the world."

"O Sir," I said, "how can you talk so to a poor servant ; surely, it does not become you to degrade yourself, to deceive such an ignorant girl as myself."

"I am not deceiving you," he said ; and was perhaps, going on to say many more fine things, when I, recollecting myself, said, "Sir, I have listened to you too long ; you must go this moment. It is neither fit for you as a gentleman, nor for me as a servant, to talk any more on these subjects. I pray you, Sir, go, and do not think of returning again to this place, for my conscience tells me, that I have already

done very wrong in entering into discourse with you."

Seeing that I was so positive, he took his leave; but before he had passed through the wicket, he turned back again, and begged my pardon, if he had said or done anything which could offend me. "You take me for a bad man, Susan, I fear," he said, "but I am not one; and in future, you may trust that I will always behave to you, as I ought to behave to so virtuous and discreet a young woman."

He had scarcely gone out into the meadows, when my mistress came in.

"Did you meet anybody in the pathway," said I to her.

"No," said she; "who has been with you? has Charlotte been here this evening?"

I immediately told her who had paid me a visit, and repeated all that the gentleman had said. Scarcely had I done speaking, when she, clapping me on the back, cried out, "I wish you joy, my Susan; play your cards well, and you are sure of being the Captain's lady."

"Indeed," said I, "I have no such vain thoughts. I am not fit to be a gentleman's wife, I know very well; and I am resolved that

I will see him no more : with your leave, Madam I will never go to his lodgings more."

"Not see him more !" said my mistress ; why, you little fool, should you dislike to be a gentlewoman ? Had you rather slave all your life and be a poor servant, than live at your ease, and be honoured and respected ?"

"Why should I think," said I, "that the Captain would marry me ? Did he not tell me, but now, that it was not in his power ?"

"Oh, but if you would try to please him," said my naughty mistress, "he would, perhaps, become so fond of you, that he would marry you in spite of his cross old father."

"And can you advise me to tempt a son to disobey his father ?" said I, lifting up my eyes and hands. "No, no," I said, "I will neither tempt him to evil, nor shall he tempt me ; I will never, if I can help it, see him more."

My mistress said no more on that subject that night, but the next evening, she ordered me to take some more of the linen which was just washed and finished, to the Captain's lodgings, and to ask for the money.

When I heard this command, I stood for some moments silent ; at last, I said, "Pray,

pardon me, my good mistress, but I must, for once, refuse to obey you."

"At your peril," said she: "go at this moment, or (and she said a very bad word) I turn you out of doors; go, and bring the money back with you."

"To-morrow," I answered, endeavouring to speak gently, "you will go to town early, and, as the Captain is not in a very great hurry for the linen, it would then be time enough for you to take it, and ask for the money."

She called me some very bad names, and, raising her hand, said, "Am I to fetch and carry at your command? Go you shall, or to Bridewell you shall be sent."

I trembled so that I was obliged to sit down, for I was unable to stand; but I made no answer.

"Are you obstinate? do you refuse to obey me still?" asked she, stooping down, and putting her face, flaming almost with rage, close to mine; "will you go, girl?"

I still was silent.

"You shall go; by heaven you shall go!" said she, dragging me up by the arm, and offering me the basket.

I refused to take the basket in my hand. She struck me on the cheek, at the same time using a most shocking oath.

I raised my hands and eyes to heaven, and said, "God, have mercy on me."

"What means that mockery of religion?" said she: "if your Bible does not teach you to be obedient to your mistress, you had best not look into it."

"My Bible," said I, "first teaches me to serve my heavenly Master, and then my earthly one."

"One would think," said she, becoming a little more gentle, "that I had asked you to do some very wicked thing: who would suppose that all this grimace is because I ask you to carry a basket a couple of miles?"

"I would carry it fifty miles," said I, "another way to please you; but, indeed, if I go to the Captain's house and ask to see him, I may expect any treatment that he pleases to offer me."

"But," said she, "I want the money early to-morrow, before I go to town. Farmer Jones will, perhaps, call for my rent, and I want about nine or ten shillings to make up the sum. You have about as much as that left, I think; if you will lend it to me for a few days, I will excuse your



going to the Captain's, and will pardon, for once, your ill-conduct."

I immediately gladly fetched the money, not doubting but that I should be paid again, as I had more than once before lent her a few shillings, which I had received duly again; and she had everywhere the character of being an honest woman in point of money matters.

But although I had lent my mistress all the little money that I had left, yet she did not even that day treat me kindly; and from that time, for several days, she was so harsh and severe with me, that my life was quite a burden to me. I never received one kind word from her; and it really seemed, from her way of using me, that she wished me to run away from her.

The only comfortable time which I passed, was when she was from home: then, indeed, did I truly enjoy the peace and quiet of the house; then I could think of holy things; and although I was quite alone, and had not one fellow-creature to speak to, yet my heavenly Father supported me. But, lest the Captain should come again to the cottage, I never walked out before the door, nor sat at the window; but I generally took my work into my own little

room, where no one could see me through the window ; for, having no friend, and no one to take care of me, it behoved me, I thought, to be more nice and careful in my behaviour, than if I had had a kind father and mother, or watchful mistress.

Once or twice, while I was sitting at my work in my little room, which was in the back of the house, I thought that I heard the step of some one in the garden ; and once, indeed, I was sure that I heard a rap at the kitchen-window ; but I thought it best to keep close, and mind my work, and to let no one in but my mistress.

One evening, I believe it was about a fortnight after the time that I had the dispute about carrying the Captain's linen to his lodgings, my mistress, who had been at work in town all day, sent a little girl to me about six in the evening, to tell me that she should be at home about nine, and that she should bring with her a friend, who was to sup and sleep with her that night ; and she sent me her orders to make the house very neat, and to get the best of what there was for supper.

Accordingly, as soon as the child had left me, I set everything in order ; and, having made

myself neat, I sat down, about nine o'clock, beside a bright fire which I had made ; and, while I waited for my mistress and her friend, I took the opportunity of reading a few chapters in my dear Mrs. Neale's Bible.

It was very near ten, and my mistress was not come ; but I was so engaged with my Bible, that I did not think how the time went.

The part of the Holy Scriptures which I was reading, was the account of the cruel way in which the wicked Jews treated the Lord of glory : how they mocked Him and buffeted Him ; how they reviled and persecuted Him ; pierced His innocent hands with the nails, leaving Him to die a slow and very painful death upon the cross. When I had finished this sad story, I shut up the holy book, and sat thinking upon the great love of God for us poor creatures, who, when we had enslaved ourselves to the devil, by our sins, sent His only Son to redeem us, by His precious blood, from everlasting misery and torment ; and how very humbly did the glorious Lord Jesus Christ take upon Himself the shape and form of a poor mortal ! how many hardships and trials did He endure ! as the holy prophets and apostles have said of Him, " He hath no form

nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Isa. liii. 2, 3. "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient." Phil. ii. 7, 8. All this He did for us. Yet, for His blessed sake, seldom do we give up any pleasure, or deny ourselves the smallest enjoyment. Although He humbled Himself to the cross for us, yet we, who are but dust, exalt ourselves, striving who shall be first, and who shall be greatest.

Then I could not but think how great the mercy of God was, in bearing so long with us sinful and obstinate beings; and I prayed that I might not be numbered among the wicked, but that God would send His Holy Spirit to strengthen me, and to enable me to resist temptation; that, in the last day, I might be found fit to inherit eternal happiness, through the mercy of my blessed Saviour.

Just as I had finished this prayer, I heard a knock at the door: I immediately hastened to open it, thinking, foolishly enough, that it could be no other than my mistress. But how surprised I was, when, instead of Mrs. Bennet, in came the Captain. Yet I did not feel so much frightened as might be supposed, for the Lord God had heard my prayer, and at that moment gave me greater courage, and greater power to resist temptation, than I should have had, had I trusted in my own strength.

As the Captain walked up to me, I stepped back, and said, "Sir, if your business is with my mistress, she is not at home."

"My business is not with her, Susan," he said, "but with you;" and then he said some very fine things in my praise.

But I looked very gravely indeed at him, and answered, "You can have nothing to say to me, Sir, and I must beg you to go away, and leave me this moment."

"You are very cruel, Susan," said he; "you treat me as if you hated me." And then he went on to tell me how much he loved me, and many other false things.

"Sir," said I, "if you loved me, as you say

you do, or, indeed, if you had that regard for me which every one ought to have for a fellow-creature, you would not give me the pain and trouble which your visits cause me. I am a poor girl, without a friend; next to the favour of God, my good name is most dear and valuable to me. If you were to be seen here at this late hour, or, indeed, at any hour, my character would be gone, and I should then loose all that I depend upon for an honest livelihood."

"Must I never see you, Susan?" said he, "if I thought that I was to be parted from you for ever, I should never be happy again."

"As to that, Sir," said I, "I do not pretend to say it is not true; for a gentleman would surely be above saying what he knew to be false at the time: but the question is not what we think will make us happy, but what God Almighty would approve. Be assured, Sir, that whatever you may now suppose, the only way to be happy is to be good. For God is the source of all happiness; from Him only comes all pleasure; and we must know, that He will never bestow them on people who do not think it worth their while to obtain His favour."

He looked at me very hard when I spoke, but did not attempt to move.

"I beg and pray you, Sir," said I, "to go away. What will become of me if my mistress should find you here?"

"Your mistress will not come yet, I am sure," he answered; "and I have much to say to you. Indeed, Susan, you must hear me, or I will leave the country, and never more visit it."

"It would be better for us both, if you would," I said.

He answered, that I was very cruel and hard-hearted.

But I will not repeat all the things he said; foolish discourse cannot be too soon forgotten. It was a very long while before I could persuade him to depart; nor would he go till I was so much frightened, that I began to shed tears, and till he had heard me, more than once, pray to God, in a very solemn manner, to protect me.

He then said to me, "Susan, I will leave you, but, whatever you may say, I never can be happy again. In a few days I will go out of the country, and return to it no more. I am not so bad a man as you think me to be: I love you dearly, Susan, not because you are hand-

some, but because you are innocent and modest, and love your God. I would marry you, but I fear my father; although you are so charming, yet he would never forgive me for taking a wife from so low a condition."

He spoke all this in so earnest a manner, that I almost believed he did not mean to deceive me. But I still persisted that he should go away. He begged very hard that I would see him once more before he left Ludlow, but I said I could not allow it. "So great a gentleman as you are, ought to have nothing to say to one in my condition."

"Will you sometimes think of me, Susan," said he, as he went towards the doors, "when I am far away in the wars and in distant lands!"

"Sir," I replied, "I ought not to think of you, but sometimes I will pray to God to bless you."

"Oh! Susan," said he, "how greatly was I deceived in you! I did not expect to find so virtuous a young woman in your situation. I have known so many of light character." Then returning again from the door, he said, "I cannot leave you yet, unless you will promise to see me once again."



I then, being more and more frightened, threw myself on my knees before him, and prayed him, for the sake of God, to depart. He seemed to be touched by my grief; he begged my pardon for having caused me so much trouble, and, at length, left the house.

As soon as he was gone, I locked the door, and bolted it, and then, throwing myself on my knees, with my face on a chair, I thanked God for having delivered me from this evil, and enabled me to endure this temptation; for I felt that it was not in my own strength that I had sustained it.

At last, being come to myself, I wiped away my tears, and stirred the fire, thinking that my mistress would be coming every minute; but when I looked at the clock, and found that it was nearly twelve, I thought that something unexpected must have happened, to keep her in town all night. I would not, however, go to bed; indeed, all alone as I was, I should have been afraid. I therefore sat down in my mistress's arm-chair, and throwing my apron over my head, tried to sleep. But at first I trembled so, that I could take no rest: I could not help thinking of the Captain; and although he had

been very wicked in coming to the cottage, yet I thought that he had done better than some persons would have done, in leaving it at my desire.

I recollected that he had said he was soon going to the wars, and felt sorry to think that he should be in danger of being killed: then I thought that if I were a rich lady, and he loved me, I would marry him, and try to make him good; which was a foolish thought, and proves that had my God left me to myself, I should have been undone.

It was past two o'clock when I fell asleep, and I slept till six o'clock, waking only now and then, as if something had frightened me.

The striking of the clock then waked me. The fire was almost out, and there was no light but what came through the crevices of the door and window-shutter. At first, I could hardly tell where I was, or why, instead of my bed, I was sleeping in a chair; but when I recollected what had happened the past night, and how the Lord God had delivered me from a great evil, I fell down upon my knees, and thanked Him for His goodness.

I then opened the window-shutters and the

door. It was a fine, bright morning : the grass in the field and the flowers in the garden were all wet and shining with dew ; the little birds were singing in the woods, and the cock was strutting about before the door crowing most cheerfully. But although everything looked so gay and bright about me, I felt so sad that I could not help crying. I never thought myself so desolate and friendless before ; and this shocking idea came into my head, that my mistress had stayed out on purpose the night before to give the captain time and opportunity to come to the cottage. Could I but be sure of this, I thought to myself, be the consequence what it might, I would leave her, and endure any hardship, rather than live with so bad a woman.

I had just got some sticks to make up the fire, and had put the kettle on for my mistress's breakfast, when I saw her coming up the path-way through the meadows.

You may be sure that I did not go to meet her, or seem as if I was glad to see her.

" Good morning, Susan," said she, as she came into the house.

I was busied in taking the teacups and saucers from the shelf, and wiping them. I did not turn

towards her when she spoke, and scarcely, I believe made her any answer; for, as you may suppose, suspecting what I did of her, it was hard for me to be commonly civil to her that morning.

She placed a bundle of linen, which she had brought with her, upon the dresser, and said in a very brisk tone, "Well, Susan, how are you disposed for work this morning? These things must be done to-day."

I still scarcely made any answer, for I could hardly speak. The tears came into my eyes, and ran down my cheeks. I wiped them away with my apron, not wishing my mistress to see them. But, however, she had observed them, and thinking, perhaps, wicked woman as she was, by my tears and silence, that I had, at last, fallen into the snares which she had laid for me, she came up close to me, with an exulting and malicious smile upon her face, such, methinks, as the wicked angel might have had when he had tempted our first mother to disobey the commands of God; and laying her hand upon my arm, bending forward at the same time to look in my face, "Why, how now, Susan?" said she. "Wast frightened, child, at being left alone last

night? Could you not rest well by yourself?" And then she laughed aloud.

I turned to her with a look which made her start, and, skaking her hand from my arm, "Wicked, abandoned woman," I said, "can you think that I do not see through your arts? God will one day avenge my cause; that great God who has hitherto protected me, a helpless orphan, from all danger, will not long suffer such crimes as those of which you have been guilty to remain unpunished."

She was silent.

"O Lord God! I thank thee," I said, raising up my hands to heaven, "for having, at length, opened my eyes, and shown me the dangers of my situation: henceforward, O my father, I will trust only in thee, and confide no longer in wicked people, who can plan my destruction, and would rejoice in my downfall."

"And pray, Susan," said my mistress, "who are these wicked people, of whom you speak?"

"Those" I said, "who could leave me last night."

She affected to be surprised, and said, "Bless me! is all this uproar about my being kept out last night. Why, Susan, must I send to ask

you leave, if by chance, I am kept from home a night ? ”

“ By what means did the Captain know,” said I “ that you were from home ? ”

“ The Captain,” said she, “ what of him ? ”

“ Do you not know,” said I, “ that he came here late last night ? And I am well persuaded, knew that you were not at home.”

“ Heaven is my witness,” said the wicked woman, “ that this is the first I have heard of his being here.”

Then she affected to be mightily angry with him ; she called him many harsh names, and said that although she had not been brought up so precisely and stiffly as I had, yet that she was as much above doing a bad action as I could be ; and pretended to be greatly offended at my suspecting her. And at last, she said so much, and brought so many arguments to prove that she knew nothing of the Captain’s coming, that I began to think I had suspected her falsely, and begged her pardon for having said anything about it.

“ Susan,” said she, “ I forgive you, in consideration of your being, upon the whole, a very honest and good girl. But, indeed, you have

used me very ill, in thinking I could commit a crime for which I should deserve to lose my life."

During the rest of the day, my mistress was kinder to me than she had been for some time. In the evening, while we were at work, Charlotte came in.

I had not seen her since she had taken such offence against what I had said about receiving the Captain's money. As soon as she came in at the door, fixing her eyes upon me, "So, so a fine lady, in truth, are you, Susan," said she, "taking upon you to preach and argue with your neighbours, blaming one for this, and condemning another for that, looking so demure and so precise, and I know not what! But now all is come out; we all now know you very well. You may as well lay aside your disguises, and look like what you are."

My mistress looked surprised; and I was so astonished that I could scarcely speak. At last, however, hearing her go on at that rate, I said, "Indeed, Charlotte, I do not understand you; what have I done?"

"What have you done?" said she, in a taunting way; "how innocent you look! And

so you pretend not to know what you have done! But this I will tell you, Miss, your character is abroad, it is the town's talk! some whom you have deceived with your fine grimaces and preachments, wonder at you; but others say that they never thought the better of you for them."

My mistress began to laugh, and, tapping Charlotte on the shoulder, said, "Why, what now, my girl?" Methinks you seem somewhat warm."

"Warm!" repeated she; "I warm! What should make me so? If Susan chooses to behave like a fool, it is not my business; only I think that those who can do as she has done have no right to be lecturing other people."

On hearing this, I smiled, for I could not guess what she was talking of.

"You may laugh, if you please, Miss," said she, "but when you come to be out of place, you will find it no laughing matter." Then she called me by some very bad name, and said that no decent person would take in such a wretch as I had proved myself to be.

I began to be frightened, and said, "Pray, pray, Charlotte, tell me what I have done."



"Done!" said she; "have you not received the Captain here, in this very house, many an evening? Do you think people have no ears to hear what is said, or eyes to see what is done? Why, the Widow Bell, who lives at the end of the lane, has seen him, many an evening, come over the stile into the meadows; aye, and has watched him to this very house, and seen him tap at the window. And, last night, Susan, where was he? Ah!" said she, tauntingly, "now I have you. What have you now to say, Miss Susan? Have you no Scripture text to quote? There, now cry, and sigh, and look pitiable, you little hypocrite, now that all your sly ways are out."

Indeed, I could not help crying; for I was thunderstruck when I heard all these things, and thought how very difficult it might, perhaps, be to clear up my character.

"What have you now to say?" cried Charlotte.

I looked at Mrs. Bennet, and said, "You can clear my character; you know that I am innocent: speak for me, my dear mistress."

"I speak for you!" said the wicked woman, who, it seems, was bent on ruining me, soul and

body ; "I am sure, child, I don't know what to say. Charlotte ! I dare say it is not true ; Susan is a good girl. I am sure I never saw anything wrong in her when I was at home ; then, you know, I am out a great deal, and, I cannot, to be sure, everybody must know, say what she might do when I am out late at night ; nay, all night, as I was last night."

I got up from my chair, Heaven forgive me, quite in a fit of anger, and said to my mistress, "Oh, you wicked woman ! is this the way in which you defend the character of a poor friendless orphan ? O my heavenly Father !" I cried, throwing myself on my knees, "protect me, I beseech Thee, protect me, for Thou art my only friend."

Charlotte looked at me as I knelt ; and when I arose, she burst into a loud fit of laughter, and used some very rude and brutal language. My mistress seemed half afraid of joining with her ; nay, she even begged her to spare me. But although her words condemned her, yet her eyes looked as if she rejoiced in seeing me thus disgracefully treated.

I had been long used to ill-language ; but, indeed, I now felt my heart very, very sad. I

placed myself in a chair, at some distance from the cruel Charlotte, and, throwing my apron over my face, sobbed most bitterly.

"You may well cry," said she, "you may well grieve and take it to heart, for you have lost every friend." Then she told me what all her neighbours in Ludlow, what all Mrs. Neale's and my aunt's old acquaintance had said of me; for, alas! it was but too true that the Captain had very often come to the cottage, when I did not know of it; and that, as might be well supposed, his many visits, particularly his having come to me the last night, when my mistress was known to be in town, had made even my best friends think very ill of me.

This the cruel girl took care to point out to me; and then, thinking to make my grief still deeper, she said, "Do not think, Susan, that the Captain, for whom you have lost your good name, has any love for you. No, no, truly, don't trust to that. 'Tis likely enough that he should be steady to a poor 'prentice girl, when he never, for a week together, is true to the finest lady in the land. Let me tell you, Susan, that there are many of your betters, even in Ludlow, that he has deceived.

"I am sorry for that, Charlotte," said I, plucking up a little courage; "but he has never deceived me."

I was sorry I said this afterwards; for it made her ten times more violent. She called me a thousand ill names; and I found, from what she said in her passion, that her anger against me was from this cause; that, since the naughty gentleman had become acquainted with me, he had taken less notice of her than he had done before.

When I found that this was the case, I wiped away my tears, and, getting up and coming towards her, "My dear Charlotte," said I, "if we have either of us ever talked of the Captain, or been led by him to do anything wrong, which, however, I hope is not the case, let us repent and be sorry for our faults, and let us think of him no more, but turn our hearts to some better thing. Do not let us add to our faults by reproaching each other, and blazing each other's follies abroad to the world."

"Oh, you little artful hussey!" said she; "what, would you have it thought that I am a partner in your faults? I think of the Captain. I hate the Captain. I would rather marry a

blind beggar out of the street than such a gentleman. But, thank Heaven, he is going out of the country; he has given warning to leave his lodgings. He is going abroad to the wars, and may the first shot that is fired bring death to him!"

While she spoke these wicked words, my mistress looked towards me with so keen a look, that I could have thought she was searching into my very heart. But I must not enter into too many particulars (added Susan Gray). The hours of my life draw fast to their close; I may have but a few days only in which to finish my sad story.

And so, that I may not run too much into length, I will say, in a few words, that the next day, when I went to do some errands in Ludlow, I found, alas! that I was not regarded in the light I had formerly been. Some of the young men of the town laughed and looked after me as I passed, as if they thought lightly of me. Mrs. Fell, the grocer's wife, told me plainly, that, say what I would, she could not but believe that I had been very inconsiderate; and Mrs. Hand, the mantua-maker, who had promised to get me a place, told me, that she could not now answer

for my character, although I might perhaps be belied. And, on this occasion, (said Susan), I cannot help remarking how very careful people should be how they credit tales that go abroad; for many a poor girl has, I fear, been made desperate by worthy people denying her their notice and countenance upon a slight suspicion.

The next day was Sunday, a day abounding in mercies to me. I arose with a mind full of discontented thoughts and worldly grief. The pleasures of the world appeared in a tempting and inviting form to me. I was then in blooming health, and imagined that I had a long life before me. I thought that the duties required of me were too hard for me. My mind was darkened, and I could not look through the veil of flesh to the happiness of a future world. My eye could not see, nor my ear hear, neither could my carnal heart conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But oh! how greatly is my God to be praised, who, in this season of difficulty and distress, still watched over me, and preserved me from being led away by the error of my ways! How wonderfully, from time to time, did He support me with strength, leading me through perils

and difficulties, on which I cannot look back without crying out, "Oh, how has thy strength been made perfect in weakness;" (2 Cor. xii. 9)

This day, my mistress going to town, I went to the village church alone. My way lay through the coppice, and, as I was rather too soon, I walked slowly on, meditating, as I went, upon my unhappy situation; for I was, as I before said, in a very discontented state, and I allowed myself to wish, and that earnestly, that I were in a situation of life to be the Captain's wife. I thought, and thought, till I began to weep bitterly; and was almost ready to cry out, in the agony of my mind, "How hard has been my lot in this life! how many hardships have I been put to! what cruel trials! how friendless, how forlorn am I!"

Such, I am ashamed to say, were the thoughts which were passing in my mind as I entered the village church; and, alas! my heart was not drawn from them till I heard the voices of the little children, who were clothed by the 'Squire's lady, singing a part of the 90th Psalm. These verses I had always loved; and, if you will give me leave, I will repeat them to you: and, surely, they contained a fine lesson to me, and to all

other young people ; for though I was then in as good health as I had ever been in my life, yet, since that time, I have never been able to serve my God in His holy house, and never now shall enter a church till I am carried thither in my coffin :—

“ Thou turnest man, O Lord, to dust,  
Of which he first was made ;  
And when Thou speak'st the word, Return,  
'Tis instantly obeyed.

“ Thou sweep'st us off, as with a flood ;  
We vanish hence like dreams :  
At first we grow like grass, that feel  
The sun's reviving beams.

“ But howsoever fresh and fair  
Its morning beauty shows,  
'Tis all cut down, and withered quite,  
Before the evening close.

“ So teach us, Lord, the uncertain sum  
Of our short days to mind,  
That to true wisdom all our hearts  
May ever be inclined.”

As I listened to these words, my heart smote me with a sense of my wickedness and ingratitude, in indulging such sinful thoughts as had been employing my mind all the morning, and I felt tears of shame and repentance trickle down my cheeks ; and suddenly, with a power I could not resist, came to my remembrance the many, many happy hours when, in that very church,



and in my little room at my mistress's, I had enjoyed solitary, sweet communion with my God, and tasted such pleasures as those who are altogether of this world cannot conceive ; also, the tender care of God over me from my infancy, and how, until that moment, I had been preserved from grievous outward sin, was brought strongly before my mind. I felt myself drawn towards my God with such cords of love as I could not resist ; the allurements of sin and the world seemed to lose their power, and, when we knelt down, I earnestly prayed to be forgiven for the discontented words I had been about to utter. I solemnly renewed my covenant with God, beseeching Him to take me wholly and entirely under His protection for the remainder of my life.

After this prayer, the rest of the day I felt such peace of mind as I cannot describe ; and as I returned from church, through the coppice, the sweet-smelling and beautiful flowers, the shady trees, the mossy banks, the voice of the cuckoo, and the hum of the bee, seemed, as it were, so many tokens of my heavenly Father's love, who, if He thus adorn this lower world for sinful creatures, shall he not much more beautify the habitations of glory ?

In the evening, my mistress asked me if I would go with her to drink tea with a friend in town, and see some of the preparations for the fair, which was to be the next day.

"Alas!" said I, "what have I to do with visits and fairs?—I, who am now in such a sad disgrace among my friends?"

"Well, but," said she, "if you stay at home, people will say the Captain will be with you."

"I cannot help that," said I; "I shall shut the door and bar the windows when you are gone, and will remain in my own little room; nor will I see any one who comes."

She said a great deal, trying to persuade me to go with her; but I was steady; and although it made her very angry, yet I would not be tempted to go to town, where I thought I might see the Captain.

As my mistress went out of the door, "Susan," said she, "If you do not see me by eight o'clock I shall not be back to-night."

As soon as she was gone, I shut myself up in my own little room, and, sitting at the foot of my bed continued, till the dusk of evening, reading my Bible. At last, it getting dark, I shut my book, and thought over what I had been

reading, of the great happiness which God has promised to those who, for His sake, give up the pleasures of the world. I remembered stories which my dear Mrs. Neale had taught me, of holy men and women, who, for the sake of their God, and for the love which they bore the Saviour who died for them, gave up their lives, some being burnt to death by fire, and others being killed by the sword, others submitting to be starved, or to perish in deep dungeons far from the pleasant light of the sun, rather than deny their God, or do anything which might make Him angry.

Then I thought how good my God was to me, in not requiring me to give up my life, or to suffer cruel pain for His sake, as these holy martyrs had done. "All He asks of me," said I, "is to bear with patience a few unkind words and harsh rebukes, and to keep myself apart from those who would tempt me to sin."

Then I thanked my God for dealing thus kindly with me, for requiring so light a sacrifice from me, and for promising so exceeding great reward to my poor endeavours.

My mistress did not come home; so about nine o'clock I went to bed, and slept most sweetly

till, at break of day, I was awakened by the crowing of the cock, and by the bleating of the sheep upon the hills.

Having earnestly prayed and besought God's blessing upon me that day, I went down-stairs and began my work. About noon I saw my mistress coming along the pathway from the town; she carried a large basket under her arm, and seemed, from her way of walking, to be in a great hurry.

When she came to the garden wicket, she called me several times with a loud voice to open the cottage door. As soon as she was in the house she set down her basket in the midst of the kitchen, and standing for a few minutes to rest herself, with her arms upon her sides, "Susan," said she, "you must see and bestir yourself. Why, this is the most unlucky thing that could have happened: I was engaged to assist my cousin at the 'Blue Boar,' and have been obliged to leave everything in sixes and sevens; and it has hurried me so, running down here and getting things together, that I think I shall hardly recover my breath to-day."

So saying, she began to unpack her basket. She took out of it some tea and sugar, a loaf of

fine white bread, some cold fowls and ham, and several bottles of wine; and placing them on the dresser, "Susan, you may well look surprised," said she; "why, who do you think is coming to pay me a visit this evening?"

"Indeed," I answered, "I cannot tell; but some great person, I should think, If I may judge by all these nice things which you have brought with you."

"A great person, indeed!" said my mistress; "well, it was the last thing that I could have thought of, or expected—that such a lady should think of visiting such a poor body as I am. You have heard me speak of having lived, in my younger days, with my Lady West, the widow lady, who lives at the great house on the other side of the town, about six miles, it may be, from this place. Well, about an hour ago, as I was at the Blue-Boar, who should ride into the yard but Mr. Thomas, my Lady West's footman. As soon as he saw me, 'Mrs. Bennet,' said he, 'my business is to you: I knew I should find you here.' And then, without getting off his horse, he told me that his lady had a mind of a little air this evening, and that she thought of coming to drink tea at my cottage, and bringing with

her her two nieces. 'My lady will be with you by four o'clock, provided it is very fine weather; but mind, Dame Bennet,' added he, in his droll way, 'if there is one drop of rain, you must not look for us.' So Mr. Thomas rode out of the yard, and I came home, in spite of my cousin at the Blue-Boar, who said she should be hurried to death to get her business done without me."

Although I had reason to think that my mistress had often before said the thing that was not true to me, yet I could not suppose that all this long story, about my Lady West and Mr. Thomas, the footman, was every word of it quite false, as it proved to be. I could not have thought that there could have breathed on earth so very bad a woman as I found my mistress to be very soon afterwards. I believed that my Lady West and her nieces really were coming to visit Mrs. Bennet; and I bestirred myself very much to get everything in the nicest order for them.

I rubbed the tables and chairs as bright as a looking-glass, and dressed the mantel-piece and the shelves with primroses, and cowslips, and violets, and such sweet flowers as I could gather

in the garden, and on the sunny bank above the house; and when I had put on the tea-kettle to boil, and placed my mistress's best china cups and saucers upon the little round table, I dressed myself as neatly as I could, in my cotton gown, with a clean cap, and my best white apron and handkerchief.

Just as I had finished dressing myself, my mistress came into my room, and seemed to be in so good a humour, that I could not but feel very much pleased with her at the time, although I have since been shocked to think of her wicked arts.

She praised me for looking neat (she knew that I loved to be called neat); and said that I had been an excellent housewife of my clothes. She then took out of her pocket a new pink ribbon, which she said her cousin had given her as a fairing.

"But I am too old, Susan," added she, "to wear pink ribbon; and as you have been a good girl lately, I believe I must present it to you." She then made me sit down, while she tied the ribbon round my head, and fastened it with a very smart knot in front.

As I had, lately, so many disagreements with

my mistress, I thought that I would not refuse to wear the ribbon, although I could not help fancying, when I looked at myself in the glass, that such finery did not become a poor servant.

It was four o'clock, and my Lady West not being come, my mistress bade me go to the top of the garden, from whence I could see the road through which the coach must pass for nearly a mile. But I could see nothing on the road but a few asses eating thistles in the hedges; so I sat down upon the green bank, to wait till the coach should appear.

I remember very well what passed in my mind while I continued to sit there alone. The evening was then very fine, although there were some very dark and angry clouds resting upon the tops of the Clee Hills, which are full in view of my mistress's garden.

The bells of the town were ringing most pleasantly, and the flowers filled the air with their sweet smell.

My mistress had told me while we were at dinner that she had seen the Captain with his soldiers march out of town early in the morning, that they had taken their leave of Ludlow, never more to return; and that it was very true, as



Charlotte Owen had said, that they were going to fight in some far distant country beyond the sea.

I thought, with pleasure, that my great trials, as I hoped, were at an end, that I should never more be liable to be tempted to turn aside from my duty by this gentleman; yet at the same time, I thought it was a very sad thing that he should go to the wars, and be in danger of having his life taken away before he had time to repent of his faults, and to make his peace with God. Then I remembered these lines, which I had learned at school :—

“ There’s no repentance in the grave,  
Nor pardons offered to the dead :  
Just as a tree cut down that fell  
To north or southward, there it lies ;  
So man departs to heaven or hell,  
Fix’d in the state wherein he dies.”

Oh ! how dreadful a thing is it to think that so many thousands of young people forget that they have immortal souls, and, for the sake of a few moments of pleasure, lose millions and millions of years of happiness !

While such thoughts were passing in my mind, I saw my mistress come up the grass walk towards me ; in her hand she had a bunch of

May-roses, which she was busied in tying together with a few sprigs of sweetbriar.

"I do not see my lady's coach yet," said I, as she came up to me.

"It is very extraordinary," answered she; "it has struck four this half-hour: I shall begin to think that she will not come: and that will be very provoking, after I have been at all this cost and trouble to get things ready for her."

"Perhaps," said I, "those very black clouds on the tops of the hills have frightened her; indeed, I fear that we shall have a storm this evening, the air is so hot and sultry, and everything is so calm and still. There is not the least wind to shake the leaves of the trees; and look how the cattle are all getting close together in that large field!"

My mistress made no answer to this; but gave me the nosegay which she had made, "There, Susan," said she, "let me see you wear these flowers this evening; here, let me fasten them for you in your bosom: I have a particular mind that you should look well before my Lady West; for if she should take a fancy to you, I might, perhaps, persuade her to take you into her family, as a kitchen-girl; and then, although you

will be forced to work, yet you will, at least, be kept from want, which, I am sorry to say, I fear you are in some danger of ; for I do not know how it is, the gentlefolks about here have got a strange opinion of your character. They will have it that you received the Captain here at night, when I was from home. It is a sad, a very sad thing, when any slur is thrown upon a poor girl's character ; it is almost next to impossible for her to clear herself."

I answered that I did not feel very uneasy on this account ; that, with respect to the Captain, God had preserved me, and I did not fear but that I should be provided for.

"Well," said my mistress, "I hope it will be so ; but, I am sorry to say I do not think that you will find it so easy to get a good place, when you go from me, as you may think ; and, I am sure, I cannot afford to keep you longer than your time : winter will be coming on, and things are much dearer now than when I first came to house-keeping. Besides, people will not take you without a character, and, indeed, I cannot, in conscience, after what has happened, give you one."

"Not give me a character !" I cried, with

astonishment; "why, my dear mistress, what have I done, to lose your good opinion? Whatever other people may think, you must know very well that I have never done anything to deserve an ill name since I came into your service."

"I must own," said my mistress, "that I have myself never seen any ill by you; but am I not from home half my time; and, as Mrs. Owen, the huckster, said to me but yesterday, how can I answer for what you do here in this lone country place when I am at work in town?"

To this I made no answer; for, indeed, my heart was too full to allow me to speak. I leaned my head upon my arm, as I sat upon the grass, and the tears ran down my cheeks. My mistress having peeped over the garden-hedge, pretending to look for the coach, which I soon afterwards found she had not the least expectation of seeing, turned hastily round, and went along the green path into the house.

After she was gone, I remained sitting alone on the grass, till the clouds rolled from the hill, and covered the whole skies. The wind began to whistle in the woods, large drops of rain began to fall, and several distant claps of thunder were heard.

I then got up, and, lifting up my eyes and hands to heaven, uttered a short prayer to God for mercy and protection ; which having finished, I ran down the hill, and in a moment was at the door of the house. The door was shut. I thought, as I pulled up the latch, that I heard some voices within ; but O ! think what was my surprise, when, on opening the door, I saw the Captain talking with my mistress—the Captain, who I then thought was far away from Ludlow, and whom I never, never more expected to see. Surely, at that moment, I foresaw the ills that were about to befall me ; for my heart seemed as it were, to sink within me, and I dropped upon a chair, which stood just beside the threshold, without having power to speak, nay scarcely to move.

The Captain no sooner saw me, than—breaking off his discourse with my mistress, for they seemed to have been busily engaged in conversation—he came up to me, and, I think, offering to take my hand, said, “ Oh ! how happy am I, my pretty Susan, in seeing you once again. But why do you turn away your face ? are you sorry that I am returned ? are you angry that I cannot live without you ? ”

The tears ran down my cheeks ; I made no answer.

“What, will you not speak to me? will you not look at me?” said the wicked gentleman; “and yet, after having rode many miles out of the town, I returned to see you, my dear Susan, for, indeed, indeed” (and he called his God to witness the shocking words), “if you will not take pity on me, I will run this sword into my heart.”

I would have spoken, but my sobs stifled my voice. My mistress came up close to my chair, and, bending her head down to me, said, “Come, come, my dear Susan, speak to the Captain; he is a good gentleman, he loves you most dearly, and I assure you he means no harm.”

The Captain repeated her last words, using many shocking oaths, to prove that they were true. Yet still I did not speak. Then the Captain threw himself down upon his knees before me, and prayed me to have pity on him. Those were the words he used.

“Have pity on you!” repeated I, wiping away my tears, and checking my sobs; “you ask for pity, yet will not bestow it on others Oh rise, for mercy’s sake, rise; and do not

humble yourself by kneeling to a poor servant. Oh that you would grant me the pity you seem so humbly to ask ! When you first knew me, I had but few friends indeed ; but now, oh ! my God ; I have not one on earth. I had then a fair and spotless reputation ; in what light am I now thought of ? ”

So great was my anguish and grief of heart when I spoke these words, that, had not my mistress, who stood by me, caught me suddenly in her arms, I should have dropped from my chair.

The Captain, seeing me look very pale, was, perhaps, frightened ; for immediately he rose from his knees, and, to give me air, opened the door of the house, which my mistress had shut, to keep out the rain, which now beat in very fast.

My mistress gave me a cup of water, and I very soon began to revive and to recover from the fright into which seeing the Captain so unexpectedly, when I believed him to be far away, had thrown me. The Captain, seeing me better, was going, perhaps, to make some excuse for having caused me so much pain, when my mistress said, “ Come, come, Sir, I will beg for the girl, that you will say no more to her on the subject at present.

Will your honour condescend to take a dish of tea with us? Susan will be proud to wait on you; and, very luckily, I happen to have in the house such fare as I have no need to be ashamed of offering to a gentleman."

So saying, she placed a chair for the Captain, and began to busy herself in making tea.

The Captain sat down on the chair which she had offered him; but never did I see any one look so sad as he did; he leaned his head on his arm, and for a long time seemed not to raise his eyes from the ground.

I should have wondered to have beheld his sadness, and thought it strange to have seen so great and gay a gentleman thus cast down, had I not remembered what my dear Mrs. Neale had often told me, that whatever thoughtless and inconsiderate people might think, God never, even in this world, suffers the bad to be happy; those who love not God may sing, and dance, and make merry, but in the midst of their laughter is the heart sad. But to return to my story.

My mistress, as I said before, busied herself very much to get tea ready; and when she had filled a tea-cup, she called me to her, for I had



not as yet moved from my chair ; and, bidding me wipe away my tears, which still, in spite of all I could do, continued to run down my cheeks, she placed a waiter in my hand, and ordered me to carry the tea to the Captain, giving me a look at the same time, as a signal to cheer up, and not look so downcast."

I trembled so that I thought I should have dropped the waiter ; and when I offered the tea to the Captain, which I did, making a courtesy at the same time, the tears again came into my eyes, and ran down my cheeks.

He lifted up his eyes from the ground, and looked up to me with such a look of bitter grief as I never saw before. I offered him the tea : he took the waiter from me, and placing it on the table, suddenly seized hold of both my hands, and said, " Susan, my dear Susan, I love you, and I think that you love me ; why should we not live together ? I will marry you, I am resolved I will, in spite of my father, in spite of all the world."

Then he swore, and called his Maker to witness to the truth of all he said.

Oh ! most honoured Sir (said Susan Gray), what will you think of me when I tell you that

I did not try to get away from the Captain, but that I listened to him for a long while. I forgot, at that moment, to apply to God for help, but He had not forgotten me, as I shall show you presently, Sir. Faithful was he who called me, and held me up, that I should not fall.

I hearkened to the Captain while he told me how greatly he loved me, and prayed me to go with him to London, where he said that I should become his wife. I should follow him. he told me, into far distant countries; and when he was wounded in battle, I should nurse him and comfort him, in return for which he promised to love me, and never to leave me.

Oh! I tremble when I think how very near I was falling into the snares that were laid for me. Oh my God, my God, how can I show my love and gratitude to Thee, for having saved me from the suggestions of my own evil heart!

While the Captain continued to talk to me, the wind became louder and higher; the air became very dark with the hard rain and hail; the thunder too, was heard more near, and the lightning flashed through the windows of the cottage.

The Captain took no notice of the storm;

but I began to be much frightened, and these terrors of my Almighty Father brought me to a conviction of my sin and danger. As it were, all at once, I awaked as from a dream ; I recollected how wrong it was in me to listen to the flattering and deceitful words of the Captain. I thought of the God who made me, and the Saviour who died for me, and struggling very hard, I tried to get my hands free. But when the gentleman would not let me go, I fell down on my knees before him, and prayed him, for the sake of God, to think no more of me ; but to leave me to gain my livelihood in an innocent and honest way, and to serve my Maker in that humble state in which He had been pleased to place me.

He looked at me, I thought, with pity, and I pleaded so hard with him, that he would, I verily believe, have left me, and have thought no more of his wicked purposes, had not my mistress said to him, in a reproaching and taunting way, "What, will you now give her up when we have gone so far ? I see that her heart relents, and she will, I am sure, go with you."

But why do I repeat all this wicked conversation. Surely, I have said too much about it

already. It is enough to say that the Captain, now being encouraged by my wicked mistress, began to use new arts to persuade me to go with him to London.

Oh, how many shocking oaths he used ! how many deceitful promises he made ! and I doubt not but that I should at length have been deceived by them, had not God Almighty mercifully put into my head a plan by which I escaped from guilt, and was brought, by His tender care, to this happy and peaceful dwelling, where I hope to close my eyes in the blessed society of those who love my God and my Saviour.

I said to the Captain and to my mistress, "I fear that God will one day require an account of your conduct towards me. You seem both resolved on my ruin, and I, alas ! have no protector but my heavenly Father. But," added I, "before you proceed in your wicked purposes, I pray you, reflect a little : remember that you cannot recall an evil action ; innocence, when once lost, can never, never be restored."

I do not remember what was my mistress's answer ; but the Captain repeated many of the wicked vows and promises he had made before,

and swore that he would never leave the cottage until I would go with him.

To this I made no reply, but remained silent, thinking of the plan which I had in my head. In the meanwhile, my mistress, coming up close to me, and laying her hand upon my shoulder, painted to me, in very strong colours, what would be my situation, if I refused to go with the Captain: how that my reputation was now, alas! quite gone; that, when I left her service, no one would take me in; that I was not strong enough for hard labour without doers; and that I should be condemned to idleness, shame, and beggary.

The Captain then described to me the happy life I should lead with him, the ease in which I should live, the rich ornaments with which I should be decked, the fine countries I should see, and the respect and honour which would be paid me.

I looked at my mistress, and then at the Captain. "Alas!" I thought, "it is very true that if I refuse to go with the Captain, I shall be exposed to shame, and want, and hard treatment." But I remembered the promise of our blessed Saviour, "There is no man that hath

left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Luke xviii. 29, 30. And I said to them, while I wiped away my tears, "I beseech you, suffer me to go, for a few moments only, to my own room, that I may, when alone, think of all that you have said to me, and consider well what I ought to do, for indeed," I said, "I am perplexed and bewildered, and very greatly distressed."

They were both, at first, unwilling to let me go; nay, my mistress absolutely told me that I should not go out of her sight till I went with the Captain. Upon which, I almost gave myself up as lost, and was in such an agony of grief, that the Captain said he could not deny me this little favour.

He no sooner let my hands go, than I darted from him like an arrow from a bow, and, running up stairs, shut the door of my own little room after me. Now the window of my room was so small, that I should have thought it impossible at any other time to have got through it; but I was now resolved, be the consequence

what it would, to make the trial, particularly after what my mistress had said.

As soon as I was alone, I spread a handkerchief upon the bed; and having placed on it my Bible and Prayer-book, and what little linen I could hastily get together, I tied up the corners of the handkerchief, and threw it from the window into the garden. The dim light, for night now came on very fast, hardly allowed me to see what I did.

Then, without waiting to put on hat or cloak, without regarding the rain or the wind, or the lightning which flashed in my face, I climbed, by means of my box, into the window, and, with some difficulty, got out upon the thatch. Now the roof of the house sloped down to the hill-side, so it was not far for me to jump into the garden: and then I was active and strong, although I am now so poor and feeble a creature. So truly does the holy prophet say, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. Isa. xl. 6.

I instantly took up my bundle, and ran, as it were for my life, till I reached the hedge just under the wood at the top of the garden. There I stopped, being out of breath, and looked back,

to see if any one followed me ; but I saw no one : I could scarcely even see the cottage itself, on account of the very heavy rain which was then falling.

Now, being a little recovered, I tried to climb the hedge ; but the ground being very slippery by reason of the rain, I fell back several times ; and when I had, at last, got over, I found that there was a deep ditch on the other side, running down with water. I found some difficulty in crossing this, and then, without waiting to seek for a path, I struck into the thickest of the wood ; for just at that moment I fancied that I heard a voice.

As I went on through the wood, I was torn by briars and brambles ; and, what was worse, after much pain and difficulty, I found, when I had made my way through the trees, that I was still very near to the cottage.

Having passed through the wood, I came out upon a large, high, fallow field, in the middle of which I remembered that there was a barn, where I thought that I might take shelter ; for the rain beat so upon me, that I found it difficult to go on. It was now become quite dark too, the lightning only now and then giving me a momentary view of my path.



As I came nearer the barn, I heard voices, and soon saw a light through the crevices of the door. I went silently up to the door, and looking in, I saw a party of gipsies, who, I heard, infested those parts, gathered together around a few embers.

I knew that these were no companions for me; I therefore, with a sad heart, turned from the barn, and at length with difficulty found my way into a long green lane, out of which I knew very well that there was a turning which led to Ludlow. I thought if I could reach the town, without being discovered, I might find some secure lodging for the night; and I felt no doubt but that God Almighty would provide for my future safety. For these words of St. Peter came into my mind, "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." 1 Pet. iii. 14.

But the lane being shaded by tall trees, and the night becoming darker and darker, the rain having by no means ceased, I missed the turning which led to the town; or rather, my God, who had hitherto been my Guide, led me on towards that place of rest which He had provided for me.

When I had walked on for nearly an hour, I became so weary, that my heart began almost to sink within me: my clothes, being quite drenched with wet, clung around me, and made it very difficult for me to walk; and the lightning, too, which flashed often in my face, and the thunder which rolled over my head, made me tremble; and I had almost resolved to lay me down on the wet ground, when I saw before me a light. It came from a cottage which stood close by the wayside. I made the best of my way up to this cottage, intending there to beg shelter; but as I walked by the window, I looked up, and saw two ill-looking men sitting before a large fire; a small table stood by their side, covered with mugs and tobacco-pipes, and an old woman sat in the chimney-corner, whom I remember often to have seen selling matches and ballads in the streets of Ludlow, and whom I knew very well to be a very drunken, dishonest woman.

“Alas!” I again said, as I turned from this house, “here is no place of shelter for me!” So, weary and worn with sorrow as I was, I continued my sad course for a mile or two further, I should think, till, being quite spent, I sat down

on the trunk of a tree, which lay on the way-side. I know not how long I sat there, but such comfort was administered to me from on high, in that solitary and deserted situation, as I can never forget. I felt that what I had but now done, in flying the temptations held out to me by the Captain, had not been done in my own strength, but in the power and strength of God; and such a consolatory, such a delightful sense of the immediate presence of God shone upon my mind, that I clasped my hands and lifted up my eyes in speechless gratitude to heaven.

At that moment the clouds rolled away from the face of the moon, and I saw my path before me, stretching towards a hill, upon which was a church. I could just see the taper spire rising above some small trees. Being greatly refreshed and encouraged, I arose and walked on.

This was no other than the church now before me: but I did not recollect my native village again; for although it is so near to Ludlow, yet I never had chanced to visit it since I was taken from the workhouse by my poor aunt; and then being but six years old, I had but a very faint remembrance of it.

I was glad, however, to see the church, and I

walked on towards it till I came to the entrance of the village. I knocked at the first house I came to; this happening to be a lodging-house, and the good woman not being gone to bed, although it was then after midnight, she very kindly took me in—very kindly, indeed; for the figure I made was by no means a creditable one; for I had neither hat nor cloak, my apron and handkerchief were torn by the briars and brambles in the wood through which I had passed; all my clothes were still dripping with wet, and my eyes were red and swelled with crying.

While the good woman took off my clothes and placed them at the fire to dry, she looked very hard at me.

“Alas!” said I, “well may you look at me; and it would be natural for you to think the worst of me. But, whatever my appearance may be, I love my God; and, if you knew my story, you would not blame me for what may now seem very strange to you.” Then I began to weep afresh.

The woman answered, that she hoped what I said was true, for my own sake: then, seeing that I was quite spent with grief, and with the great

fatigue which I had gone through, she took me into a small room, where I was very thankful to lie down on a straw bed.

Being greatly tired, I very soon fell asleep ; but I had many uneasy dreams, and awoke by dawn of day.

I looked about me, and for some time could not call to mind where I was. But when I remembered all that had passed the day before, and thought of my unhappy situation, in a strange place, without friends, without money (for I had lent all that I had left to my mistress), and not knowing what would become of me, or how I should be able to earn my bread, I felt much affected.

Then I arose from my bed, and, having dressed myself, I took from my bundle my dear Mrs. Neale's Bible, and read the account of the sufferings and death of my blessed Saviour, and also the history of the holy martyr Stephen, who was stoned to death, and of other prophets and good men who had endured very great pains and sorrows, and had laid down their lives for the sake of their God.

And when I had read these things, I thought no more of my own light afflictions ; that is, I

felt no more disposed to repine and murmur at them, although, in spite of all I could do, I could not shake off the sorrow which sat heavy upon my heart ; and what, perhaps, made me less able to do so was, that, from being so long out in the wet, and from having gone to bed without having had time to dry myself sufficiently, I had caught a bad cold, which made me feel very ill, although I could scarce tell what particular ailment I had.

When I had done reading, I went into the kitchen, where I found the family at breakfast. The mistress of the house, seeing me look ill, offered me a dish of tea, which I did not refuse. I shall remember her kindness to my dying day, and never will in my prayers forget to ask God's blessing for her ; any other return I cannot make her.

After breakfast, I sat down on a bench in the chimney-corner ; for although the weather was very warm, yet I shivered with cold, like one in a fit of the ague.

My landlady seemed to be very sorry for me, and asked me if I had long been ill. I answered as I then believed, that I had only a slight cold, and hoped soon to be better. I thanked her for

her kindness, and asked her whether she would let me continue to lodge in her house, if I could get any work in the parish.

She said that she liked my way of speaking, and my manners, better than my appearance; that my coming to her, as I had done, through the storm the last night, without hat or cloak, had, to be sure, a strange look, but that she had seen nothing amiss in my behaviour.

"I hope the time will soon come," said I, when I shall be able to clear all this up to you. But, in the meantime, if you will suffer me to lodge in your house, you will do me the greatest charity."

"I cannot," said she, "find it in my heart to turn you out, so long as you speak so properly."

I then enquired if it would be possible to get any work in the village.

She asked me if I had been used to out-door work.

I said that I had not, but that I should be thankful to be put in any honest way of getting my bread.

"You do not look as though you were fit for hard labour," she said.

I answered, "We do not know what we can do until we have tried."

"You seem very willing to do anything," she replied. "I am going this morning to carry this woollen which I have spun to Farmer Flemmings. The farmer begins his hay-harvest to-morrow ; perhaps he will have no objection to another hand." Then she asked me my name.

I said that it was Susan Gray ; and told her the names of my father and mother, and where they had lived.

"And do you not know," answered she, "that this is the very parish in which you say that your parents lived? I doubt not but Farmer Flemming knew them very well, for he is now getting old, and has been overseer of the poor these twenty years past."

When I heard this, and found that I had taken shelter, in my affliction, in my native village, I felt my heart, I know not wherefore, strangely touched, insomuch that I could not help shedding fresh tears. I thanked my landlady for her kind offer of getting me employment from Farmer Flemming, and for consenting that I should continue to lodge in her house.

Towards mid-day, I found myself much



better, and was able to employ myself in mending the rents which I had got in my clothes. In the evening, however, I was almost spent for want of food ; for I would not take any which my good hostess offered me, she having a large family, who entirely depended on her for bread. I, accordingly, went into my own room to examine my bundle of linen, thinking that I might, perhaps, exchange some part of it for a loaf of bread at the baker's shop, which was just opposite ; when I found, unexpectedly, wrapped up an old handkerchief, among other little things which had been bestowed on me in my childhood, by way of rewards for good behaviour, a new sixpence, which Mrs. Sarah had given me for telling the truth, when I had broken a fine china cup of my dear Mrs. Neale's.

The tears of joy came into my eyes ; I clasped my hands together, and cried out in the words of the holy David, "The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : He leadeth me beside the still waters." Ps. xxiii. 1, 2.

Then, having borrowed an old straw hat of one of my hostess's daughters, I went to the baker's shop, and having laid out a penny on a

roll, which I ate with thankfulness to God, I walked through the village towards the Church, with the intent to visit the grave of my dear father and mother, who were buried, as you may know, Sir, under the large yew-tree on the south side of the churchyard.

As I walked along the village street, I called to mind a thousand things which had happened in my early days. I remembered them only as one remembers a dream, very faintly and very obscurely. I crossed the stile at the end of the village, and took the path up the hill to the church, by your house, Sir.

I saw you walking in your garden, with your book in your hand, and I knew you again, and I remembered all the kind things you had done by me ; how you had carried me in your arms, and talked to me of heaven, and of my God, and our blessed Saviour. I stopped at the garden gate, and thought that I would be so bold as to speak to you, and to make myself known to you. But before I could get courage to speak, you turned into the house without looking towards me.

Then, with a sad heart, I left the gate, and began to climb the hill. As I went along, I gathered in my apron a few primroses, cowslips,

and other flowers, to scatter over my beloved father and mother's graves, if I should be able to find the spot where their dear remains were laid in peace.

When I got within the churchyard, I was obliged to sit down on a tombstone, to rest myself; for I was become so weak, that I was quite spent with the walk. My heart beat, and a pain in my side, which I had never felt before, was so violent that it almost took away my breath.

I soon, however, became better, and I got up and walked round the church, till, coming to the great yew-tree, I saw under it two graves, side by side, at the foot of which was a stone, on which I read the names of James and Mary Gray.

I scattered the flowers which I had gathered upon the graves; yet, although I had of late wept so much, I did not then shed one tear. I stood with my eyes fixed upon the gravestone for a very long while; and in that time I thought over all the strange things which had befallen me since the time when, a very young child, I had followed my dear parents to their last quiet home. But, although I did not weep, my heart felt very, very sad, and I wished that the hour

were near at hand when I might lay my body in the dust beside those of my dear father and mother, and when my soul, through the merits of my blessed Saviour, might return to Him that made it.

While I remained in the churchyard, the sun set, and the darkness of night came on. The bats, with their leathern wings, fluttered about me, and the owl screamed from the church tower. Then calling to mind that if I should stay out late my hostess might, perhaps, have reason to think some ill of me, I walked slowly and sadly towards the village.

When I returned to my lodgings, my landlady told me that she had engaged me to go the next day to Farmer Flemming's to make hay. "You must be there by six o'clock," said she, "and your work will not be finished till late; but," added she, looking hard at me, "you do not seem fit for such a day's work; you look very ill."

"I am not very well," I said, "but I cannot starve, and I must do any work which I am so fortunate as to get."

The good woman seemed very sorry for me: she warmed some beer, and, putting toast and some spice in it, she made me drink it; and then

advised me to go to bed, that I might be the better fit for next day's labour.

That night, I thank my God, I enjoyed much sweet rest, although I had many dreams. I remember one in particular, which I have since often thought of with much pleasure. I fancied that I was lying on my bed very ill indeed, nay, almost about to die ; I was alone, and no one to take care of me. And I thought that my dear father and mother came into the room, and stood, one on each side of my bed ; and my mother said, "This is our beloved Susan : this is the child we love. She has been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." This was a sweet dream, and was surely sent by God as a comfort to me.

The next morning by break of day, I prepared myself for my new employment. I felt somewhat better than I had done the night before ; and the day being fine, I was tolerably cheerful as I took my way to the farmer's.

When I came to the house, I found the yard full of men, women, and children, with their forks and rakes in their hands, ready to set out for the hay-field. They stared at me when I came into the yard, but did not speak.

I went up to Mrs. Flemming, who was standing at the kitchen door, giving to each of the hay-makers a large slice of bread and cheese.

I made a courtesy to her, and told her that my name was Susan Gray.

"O! the young woman," said she, in a very loud voice, "whom Nanny Jones was speaking of. But methinks you do not look very fit for hard work." She then called to her husband, who was sitting within by the kitchen fire, to tell him that James Gray's daughter was come.

Hearing this, he came out, without his coat, and with a woollen night-cap on his head, and ordered one of his men to bring me a rake. Then looking at me very earnestly for some time, "How comes it, young woman," said he, "that you have run away from your service? I fear that you have not been so good a girl as you should have been. My nephew, William Ball, has told me of your tricks before now; but no good ever comes of girls when they get acquainted with those fine fellows in red coats."

I was going to make some answer, when Mrs. Flemming, raising her voice still louder than she had done when she spoke to me first,

bade me not be saucy, but mind what her husband said to me.

“Let me tell you, young woman,” said the farmer, “that you, who are come of such honest parents, might be ashamed of having done as you have done. Your father and mother were as good people as any in the parish, and if it had not been for the respect I had for them, you should never have worked for me.”

So saying, he turned away into the house, and my new mistress bade me follow the other hay-makers out of the yard.

Oh ! with what a sorrowful heart did I walk slowly after the rest, till we came into a wide field, which is skirted on one side by that large wood now in our view, and is bordered on the other by the brook which runs into the river by the mill.

My companions had heard what the farmer and his wife had said to me, and I soon found what they thought of me ; for the old women looked sour at me, and the young ones laughed and whispered, glancing sily, at the same time, at me.

But what grieved me most was, that the young men spoke to me as if they thought

lightly of me. I, however, went on with my work, keeping close with the rest of the women, and saying very little.

Towards mid-day, I became very weary with my work ; my knees trembled, and I had a constant pain in my side. However, I continued my work till evening.

Yet, tired as I was, I was unable to sleep, for I felt feverish, and my mouth was parched with very great thirst.

I went to the farmer's again the next day, although I was fitter far to keep my bed ; and as I behaved with modesty, and returned not evil-speaking for evil-speaking, my companions, the hay-makers, began to think better of me. The women, in particular, treated me with more kindness : I could see, however, that the young men still continued to think lightly of me.

The weather being very hot, the hay was ready to carry by Friday.

I was worse this day than I had ever been before, yet I strove to keep up and do my work.

I was making up the hay into large hay-cocks, with two or three more young women, at the lower end of the meadow, when the young men came with the waggon in at the



gate which is at the top of the field. Among these was William Ball, the farmer's nephew, the young man of whom I have spoken before, whom I had never seen since I ran away from him at Mrs. Bennett's.

It seems that he had never forgiven me for this slight, as he thought it ; and he was mightily pleased when he heard, at Ludlow, where he had spent the last few days with other young men, who had gone there to the fair, of the disgrace I had fallen into on account of the Captain. And it was a new pleasure to him to be told by his uncle, when he came home, that I had run away from my service, and had come to him for work.

So, as soon as he came to that part of the field where I was, he called out to me from the waggon, where he was loading the hay, " Well, Mrs. Susan, and how did you leave the Captain ? or, to speak more properly, how did the Captain leave you ? For they tell me, in Ludlow, that he is gone out of the country, and has taken with him, by way of company, Charlotte Owen, the huckster's daughter." Then he laughed aloud.

I was like one thunderstruck when I heard these words : my rake fell from my hand, and my

eyes were filled immediately with tears, when I thought of the imprudence of poor Charlotte.

I will not repeat all the foolish jokes of William Ball, when he saw my grief and distress. Indeed, I paid but little heed to what he said. At length, one of the old women told him that he might be ashamed of himself for making a jest of what did not seem to her any jesting matter: that with respect to me, she had seen no harm by me since she had become acquainted with me; that she believed I was a very modest girl; and, as to the other poor young woman, who had gone off with the Captain, she did not see what there was to laugh at in a poor creature's running soul and body into ruin and misery.

"But is it true," said I, "that she is gone with the Captain?"

"Ay, true enough," answered William: "so, my good girl, wipe away your tears, and think no more of the Captain; for, I promise you, he thinks no more of you. Mrs. Owen herself was the person who told me of Miss Charlotte's freak. Never did I see a woman in such a taking: she stormed and raved; and I verily think that she would have killed her daughter, if she could have laid her hands upon her."

"Well, but," said one of the young women, "when did all this happen?"

"Why, you know," answered William Ball, "that the Captain and his men marched out of town on Monday morning, and about the middle of the day on Monday Charlotte was missing. But as she often went from home without saying anything to her mother, Mrs. Owen thought nothing of it till night came on, and that dreadful storm of thunder and lightning; then the old lady began to be a little frightened, and she sent to all her neighbours, but could hear nothing of her daughter. And it was but yesterday that she was told that Miss had marched after the Captain; although some folks do not scruple to say that his honour could well have dispensed with her company." Then he laughed again, and almost all the young men, and some of the young women, joined in his mirth.

But the old woman shook her head, and turning to another woman who stood by, she said, "I do not quite relish all this jesting; none but fools," as the Scriptures say, "would mock at sin." Prov. xiv. 9.

"Very true," replied the other. "For my

part, I do not feel very much disposed to laugh. I cannot help feeling very sorry for the poor mother of that bold hussy."

"Why, as to that," returned the old woman, one is very sorry for any one who is inconsiderate, and lays up for himself stores of misery. But Mrs. Owen may thank herself for what has happened. Why did she train up her child to the love of finery and vanity? Why did she wish to make a smart lady of her, instead of a modest, unassuming, decent girl? Why did she herself practise lying and deceiving before her; and neglect her duty to God, spending the Sabbath in idleness, feasting, and gossiping? As the wise man says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6.

We all then sat down upon the grass to our dinner, and I heard no more of this discourse at that time. But the shocking wickedness of the Captain still dwelt very heavily on my heart.

"Alas! alas!" I thought, "what will be the end of all these crimes?"

I did not that day earn half my wages, for I was so weak that I was often forced to sit down to rest myself. A mortal disease had already

seized upon me, although I did not know it. "What is our life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." James iv. 14.

But I forget that, perhaps, to-morrow my soul may be required of me; let me, then, hasten to finish my story.

I felt increasing pain during that night, and my few hours of sleep were disturbed by unpleasant dreams concerning what I had heard that day in the hayfield.

The night was rainy. Mrs. Flemming had told me, the evening before, that, as her husband would have no more work for me till Monday, she would employ me in weeding a garden, which was at some distance from the house, by the water-side.

She had given me a basket and a small weeding-knife; and, having directed me which way to go to the garden, bade me be there betimes in the morning.

Now this garden was no other than that which was formerly tenanted by my dear father: when he died, Farmer Flemming had taken it, and, the house being a very old one, it had never been inhabited since my beloved parents had

quitted it. It was now all fallen to ruins, and was only used as a place for seeds and gardening-tools.

When I reached the garden, the rain had ceased ; but the ground was very damp, and a very thick fog arose from the river, insomuch that I could scarcely see the willows which grow by the water-side. It went to my heart to see the cottage, which I so well remembered, and so dearly loved, gone almost to ruins. There was no glass in the windows ; the roof was open in many places, and one of the chimneys had fallen in.

Many sad thoughts passed in my mind as, kneeling on the damp ground, I weeded the strawberry-bed, just beneath the cottage-wall, and tied up the rosebushes and honeysuckles in the little plot of ground from which my mother used to gather nosegays, on a Sabbath morning, to dress the chimney-piece and the kitchen-window.

About mid-day the sun began to appear through the fog : but although it shone upon me, it could not warm me ; for all my limbs were cold, and trembled with a mortal sickness. At length I became quite spent, and was forced to desist from my work. I then reflected that

my labour was not worth my wages, and it seemed to me that I did wrong in receiving from the farmer the hire of a stout healthy person : and although I knew not by what means I should be supported, yet I resolved to go to Mrs. Flemming, and to tell her, honestly, that I was unable to earn my bread, and that I would not receive money which was not my due. And although I had no prospect before me but of starving, yet I trusted in God, that he would not forget me.

Then I called to mind the words of the prophet :—" Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habak. iii. 17, 18.

So I took up my basket and my weeding-knife, with the intent to go back to the village. But when I arose from my knees, I found it difficult to stand ; and I was forced to sit down upon the stone step before the house door, to recover myself a little. Here I had sat many times when I was a child, and amused myself

with shells and stones, and other such trifles as children love, while my dear father and mother were busied in the garden. And here I called to mind a thousand little events long time forgotten. I remembered how my dear mother used often to leave her work, to look after her little Susan; how sweetly she used to smile when she saw me coming towards her; and how anxiously she watched me, if, by chance, I ran, with heedless steps, by the side of the river. I remembered the wood-strawberries, strung like threads of beads upon a blade of long grass, the acorn cups, and the blackberries, which my father used to give me when at evening he returned home from market through the wood which is beside our garden.

“O, my loved parents,” I said, “how tenderly did you guard me from evil in my infant days! Not less tenderly has my heavenly Father watched over me since I have been deprived of you! He left me not comfortless. I went in the strength of the Lord God, “I will make mention of Thy righteousness, and of Thine only.” Psalm lxxi. 16.

Then I lifted up my eyes and hands to God, in gratitude for His goodness to me.



While I was still thinking of these things, a sudden faintness came over me, and I lay for some time without sense. At length, however, I recovered ; yet I had very great difficulty to get home to my lodging, where I immediately laid myself on my bed.

Nor did I leave my bed, till you, Sir, visited me ; and till, by your kindness to me, my health and strength were, for a time, in some degree restored to me.

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Then Susan Gray, having finished her story, fell upon her knees, and, in a most solemn and affecting manner, renounced all dependence upon any of her own works or deservings, confessing herself to be a grievous sinner, even one that could not, without divine help, cease from sin, and solemnly affirming that her escape from the open acts of sin, to which she had been tempted, had been effected by the power of God ; and she concluded by a solemn act of praise to the blessed Trinity—her Father, her Redeemer, and her Sanctifier.

She then arose from her knees, and, turning to me, my wife, our daughters, and the nurse,

she thanked us for our kindness to her in a way which made the tears flow afresh from our eyes; for, as you may suppose, they had often flowed abundantly before, during the time of our hearing the sad story of this good girl.

After she had finished her history, she lived only three days; but never, never surely did any one prepare for death with so much joy, such holy hope and humble confidence in God, as did this excellent young woman!

The night before she died, I gave her the sacrament; my wife and two eldest daughters being present, and partaking of the holy feast with her.

But, before she would suffer me to begin the sacred office, she called God to witness, that she from her heart forgave all those who had, by any means, done her any ill; she particularly mentioned the names of Mrs. Bennet, Charlotte Owen, and the Captain; and prayed God to give them a full sense of their wicked lives, that so they might repent, and be partakers, through the merits of their Saviour, of everlasting happiness.

After she had taken the holy sacrament, she fell into a sweet sleep, from which she awoke at

dawn of day. Her nurse saw, by the change which had taken place in her during the night, that she had not many hours to live, and immediately sent for me and my wife.

When we came into the room and stood by her bed-side, she smiled, but did not speak. I asked her how she did, and how she had rested. She made no answer, but held out her pale cold hand to mine.

She soon afterwards asked for her Bible ; and when it was brought to her, and laid by her, she seemed satisfied, and did not attempt to open it.

She grew fainter and fainter, and was not able to take anything ; but she often raised her eyes to heaven, and clasped her hands together. A few moments before she died, we heard her repeat, in a soft, low voice, and very distinctly indeed, the holy name of her Saviour. She smiled at us, who stood weeping around her ; and, closing her eyes, died so easily and so gently, that for some moments after her soul had quitted the body, we believed she was only sleeping.

But when I found that she was really dead, I could not help crying out, while I looked on her sweet composed face, and remembered how

gloriously she had been enabled to resist evil, even unto death,—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin.” 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56.

Her body was, soon afterwards, removed to the best room which the nurse's house afforded, and there was laid upon a neat bed, and covered with a fair white sheet. Her head, which rested upon a pillow, was dressed as it had been while she was still living, in a neat cap with a plaited border, and bound with a white band; and still it might be seen, by those who looked at her, that the time was not long passed when she was very beautiful. But what is mortal beauty, that we should take delight therein! “All the glory of man is as the flower of grass.” 1 Pet. i. 24.

About this time the history of Susan began to be much talked of in and about Ludlow, it now being generally known, that she had run away from her mistress. Some took her part, and said that she had been very ill used; and others spoke up for Mrs. Bennet. Many of my neighbours came to me to know the truth of this strange story; and, indeed, some persons called upon me, on that account, whom I had never seen before.

Among these, were my Lady West and her nieces. They were very anxious to know, if all they had heard was true ; for by some means it had come to their knowledge that Mrs. Bennet had used their names to deceive the poor girl.

When I told these ladies the true history of Susan, and how nobly she had resisted temptation, they all shed tears ; and my Lady West said that she had been strangely deceived in Mrs. Bennet, and had been a very kind friend to her, because she thought her to be a very good woman : " But henceforward," added she, " I will do no more for her."

Then these ladies would go to nurse Browne's, to see the remains of poor Susan ; and, as they walked through my garden, the young ladies gathered roses and other sweet flowers, to lay upon her.

When they came into the room where the corpse lay, they all shed tears afresh. They looked for a long time on her sweet, composed face ; for she died so easily, and in so heavenly a state of mind, that there was nothing ghastly or frightful in her appearance : she rather looked as if she was still sleeping.

" Sweet young creature " said my Lady West,

as she looked at her, "would to heaven that I had known her sad situation with that wicked woman! I would have taken her into my family and she never should have known the evils which have brought her to this untimely end."

"Surely, surely," said one of the young ladies, "if the Captain could see Susan, as we now do, deprived of life by his means, he would turn from his wicked course of life to the service of his God."

Then they scattered the flowers they had gathered upon the bed, and took their leave; but before the coach drove away from the door of the cottage, my Lady West asked me when I proposed that Susan Gray should be buried. "For," said she, "I and my nieces intend to be present at her funeral, that we may do all the honour in our power to this most virtuous young woman."

The Sabbath following the day of Susan's death was the day of her funeral.

According to the custom of the parish, she was buried at the time of evening service. I will describe the manner of her funeral, for the satisfaction of those good persons who take delight in these solemn scenes.

It was early in August, and the weather was very fine. When all the congregation was assembled in the church (and I never remember to have seen in it so large or so respectable a congregation, for there were many ladies and gentlemen from Ludlow, besides my Lady West and her nieces, and the Squire of the next parish, with his family), I entered the church in my gown and cassock, followed by six young women dressed in white, bearing the coffin. My three daughters, and three daughters of a farmer in my parish, followed as mourners, dressed also in white, with hoods of fine white linen. As I walked up the aisle, I repeated these words from the burial service:—

“I am the resurrection and the life,” saith the Lord: “he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” John vi. 25, 26.

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” Job. xix. 25-27.

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Tim. vi. 7. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job i. 21.

The coffin was placed upon a bier in the middle of the church, and all the young women stood round it while I read the evening prayers. After the prayers, the ninetieth psalm was sung by the whole congregation; which being finished, I preached a sermon upon the text which follows:—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." James i. 12.

Having delivered my text, I proceeded to point out, though in general terms, not being in a place where I could enter into particulars with propriety, how our beloved sister departed this life; had endured various trials and temptations, and had come off victorious; insomuch that, though she was a poor and friendless orphan, and had filled one of the humblest situations in life, yet such was the sentiment inspired by the report of her conduct, that it had induced many who were lovers of virtue, in the neighbourhood, to assemble, with the purport of paying the last honours to her remains.



I then proceeded, to this effect :—" My beloved brethren, I now call upon you to enquire, by what strength was this our sister enabled to overcome the world ? Wherein did she differ from the multitude of young persons who have fallen under temptation ? Did she not partake of the same nature with other sinners ? Are we not told by Him who cannot lie, that, as in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of one man resemble another ? Are we not all naturally corrupt ? Or had she any peculiar outward advantages by which she was guarded from sin ? No ; on the contrary, she was particularly exposed to the attacks of evil, and the very persons who should have protected her became her tempters.

" It may be said that she had enjoyed the advantage of pious instruction for some years. This is true ; and by these instructions, through the divine blessing, she was saved.

" I next enquire, how she was preserved by the instructions given her ? and wherefore what is called religious instruction so often fails of producing the same blessed effect on those to whom it is given ? The principal reason is this, that the lessons taught to young persons are,

generally speaking, merely moral ; and the terrors of the law are set before them, rather than the privileges of the gospel."

I then went on to point out that, if we read the history of the Israelites and Jews from the time of the delivery of the law by Moses till the completion thereof, we shall find that the terrors of temporal calamity had little power to influence the conduct of those who were under the law ; but when the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit were shed abroad, men became new creatures, as is related in Acts ii. 44-47 :—" And all that believed were together, and had all things common : and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." Here we find the love of God, and charity towards man, produced by the Holy Spirit of God ; so that this divine influence was able to produce, in one moment, what the law was found utterly unequal to do during the period of many ages.

The venerable instructress of our departed

sister had early shown to her the evil of her own nature ; and, to give her a lively sense of the love of Christ, she had taught her that she could be saved only by the blood of Christ, shed for her upon the cross, and that her heart could be made clean only by the Holy Spirit of God.

These instructions, through the grace of God, had sunk deep into her heart. She had early learnt to seek assistance where it may always be found ; thus, when the day of severe trial came, she was not at a loss. Surely might she say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Isa. xlv. 24. And, surely, in time of affliction and temptation, even He came forward to her assistance, according to the words of the royal psalmist : "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and honour him." Psa. xci. 1, 14, 15.

Having more fully and largely explained how temptations, of every kind, ought to be met and overcome by the like precious faith in the

strength and power of God through Christ, I proceeded to make the application to the audience. "You are not all tried," said I, "as this our beloved daughter has been; yet, you must be all sensible that you are surrounded by many and very great dangers. The young are daily and hourly tempted to forsake their duties for their pleasures, and the aged are tempted to the love of money and to worldly anxiety. Some of you are tempted by worldly prosperity to love the world too well, and others in adversity to murmur against your Maker: but, my children, pray, without ceasing, to your God, for His divine help; for, as the holy Apostle says, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'" 1 Cor. x. 13.

Then I finished my sermon by speaking of the joy prepared for those who shall endure unto the end, through all the trials of this life; the promises of God made to His saints, the robes of light, the crowns of glory, and the dwellings of eternal happiness, which, through the merits of our Saviour, are prepared for those who have loved their God in this present world. And I

concluded with a solemn prayer, that all the congregation then present might, with our beloved sister, now no more, be thought worthy, through the merits of our Saviour, to meet in the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

After the sermon, I finished the burial service, and all the congregation followed the coffin to the grave.

Every one present shed tears when the earth was cast upon the body : but, surely, they were tears of joy ; for I have heard many persons who were then present since say, that they would gladly have taken the place of Susan Gray and have laid themselves down with her in the dust, could they thus have been admitted to that place where, we trust, her soul now is.

Susan Gray was buried by the side of her dear parents ; and my Lady West was so good as to cause a monument of white stone to be placed over her grave. These words are engraved on the stone :—

“To the memory of SUSAN GRAY, who departed this life in the nineteenth year of her age, on the 29th day of July, in the year of our Lord, 1741.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”  
Titus ii. 13

Twenty years are now passed since the death of Susan Gray, yet still she is spoken of with pleasure and honest pride in our little village. Every stranger who visits us is taken to see her grave, and her story is told by every mother before she sends her daughter from her native cottage, to earn her bread in the wide, wicked world.

Mrs. Bennet has been dead nearly ten years ; she died in the workhouse in Ludlow, where she spent the last five years of her life in a most miserable way. For after the story of Susan Gray was known, all her friends forsook her, and her customers fell off one by one ; till at length the old woman, having spent the few guineas which the Captain had given her for her wicked services, was obliged to give up her cottage, to sell her furniture, and to go into the poorhouse, where, from confinement and hard living, she soon fell into a bad state of health, and, having lingered in sad pain for a few years, died without one friend to weep over her. Thus she received the recompense of her wicked deeds even in this world, and terrible, is it to be feared, will be her lot in the world to come. " Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and

all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. iv. 1.

It was not till after Susan Gray had been dead seven years that I heard of the sad end of Charlotte Owen. She went, as has been before said, after the Captain, when he left Ludlow. It was true, indeed, that he did not wish for her company: however, he took her with him to London, and she lived with him about a month; at the end of which time the Captain's wife came from Ireland; for this wicked man, in spite of all the vows and promises he had made to Susan Gray, had been married about twelve months to a very rich lady in Ireland.

The Captain then left Charlotte Owen, and went abroad to the West Indies, where, I heard some time afterwards, that he died, I fear, without repentance.

What became of Charlotte Owen after that time, for some years, I could not hear; but I afterwards found that she had led a very wicked life; for, at the end of seven years, a friend of mine, who is a clergyman in London,

coming to see me in the country, told me that, a few months past, he had visited a poor wretch who was dying in a garret, in a narrow alley in London; that she said her name was Charlotte Owen, that Ludlow was her native place, and that she had brought herself to this sad state by her extravagance and wickedness.

My friend talked to her of repentance, and of her Saviour and her God; but she would not hearken to him. She said she could not bear to hear the name of her God, or of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom she had despised: she said she could not endure the thought of death, and made use of the most profane and shocking words when the doctor told her that he could not save her.

In this dreadful state she lay for some days: and although the pain of her body was very great, yet it was nothing to the grief and anguish of her mind.

As soon as she was dead, her body was thrown into a coffin by the mistress of the house in which she lodged, and she was buried immediately; for she had no friend to watch by her, or to close her eyes, or to see that the last offices were performed decently for her.



And now I must finish my story by beseeching you, my good young women, to take warning by the sad end of this wicked girl, and to shun the ways of sin, which lead to eternal misery.

Remember Susan Gray, and let her example be ever in your mind; and let it not be your wish to be rich and great, to seek for distinction and pleasure in this world, but to do your duty in that humble state in which God has placed you. And, however lowly and poor that state may be, yet fear not that you will fail of your reward: God is no respecter of persons, but He will reward every man according to his deeds.

“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.  
2 Peter ii. 4, 9.

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